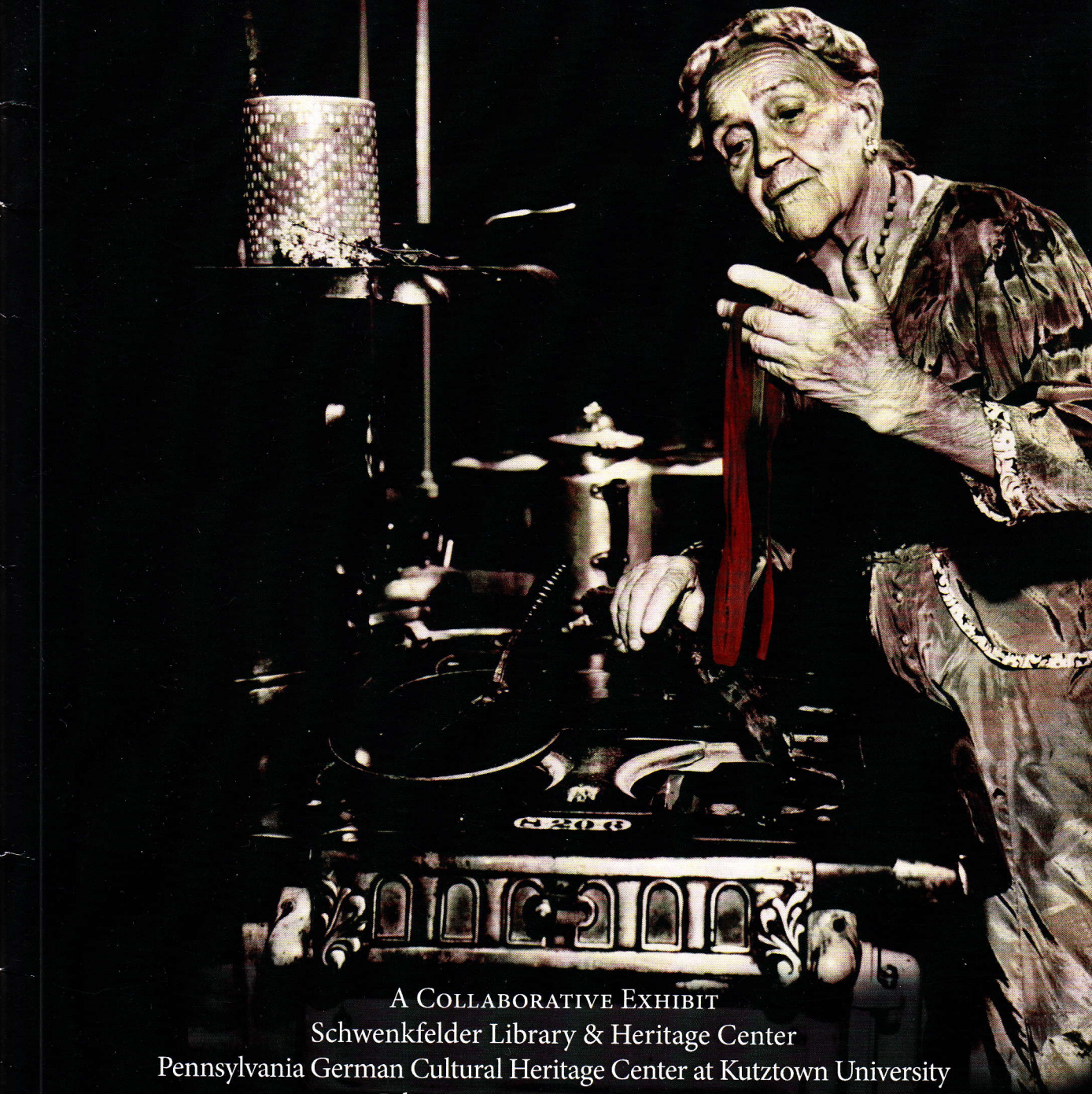
Powwowing in Pennsylvania

Healing, Cosmology, & Tradition in the Dutch Country



A Collaborative Exhibit
Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center
Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center at Kutztown University
July 19, 2015 - January 31, 2016

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This exhibition of Pennsylvania Dutch folk healing manuscripts, books, and ritual objects is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Don Yoder (1921-2015), Father of American Folklife and contributer to this display. Dr. Yoder's ground-breaking work for the advancement of the study of folk medicine was instrumental in assembling the contents of this exhibit, first through his research materials in the Roughwood Collection, and later through his assistance in developing the Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer, guest curator of ***Powwowing in Pennsylvania.*** *Among the very first and largest of its kind, this exhibit encompasses a wide range of expression in the material culture of folk healing, and offers a rare opportunity to experience a diverse spectrum of spiritual and cosmological beliefs in Pennsylvania Dutch folk culture throughout three centuries.*

As a collaborative effort, this exhibit features items from the following Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer, The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center, The Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center at Kutztown University, the Thomas R. Brendle Museum at Historic Schaefferstown, as well as materials from the private collection of Jim and Marcia Houston, and the Nancy and Abe Roan Collection.

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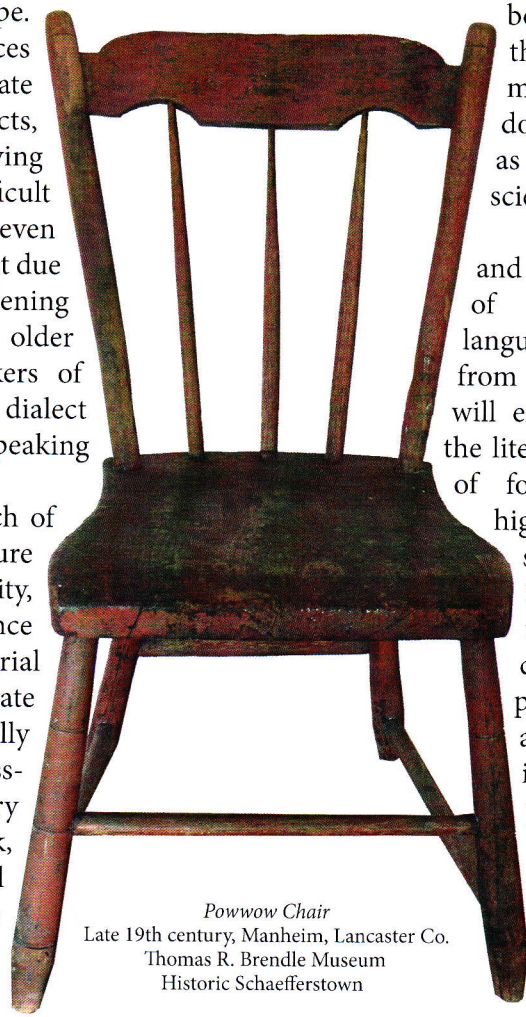
Powwowing in Pennsylvania

Healing, Cosmology, and Tradition in the Dutch Country

By Patrick J. Donmoyer

Pennsylvania's ritual folk healing tradition of Powwow or *Braucherei* is recently experiencing a resurgence in interest among scholars, preservationists, and cultural enthusiasts both in the United States, and in Europe. However, primary sources on the subject such as private manuscripts, ritual artifacts, and oral histories with living practitioners are often difficult to obtain, and in many cases even more problematic to interpret due to the now rapidly broadening language gap between an older generation of native speakers of the regional *Pennsylvaanisch* dialect and contemporary English-speaking academics.

In addition, as much of the primary source literature was written, not for posterity, but for personal reference by practitioners, the material contained in these private manuscripts is typically prescriptive and process-oriented within a very specific cultural framework, often lacking contextual references that would be helpful for interpretation by researchers. Because of the personal nature of this type of material, many important aspects of ritual process have been left unwritten, or remain implicit rather than clearly expressed. As a result of these challenges, both linguistic and contextual, the ritual mechanics of folk medicine have often been downplayed, and described as eclectic, nonsensical, un-scientific, or superstitious.



Powwow Chair
Late 19th century, Manheim, Lancaster Co.
Thomas R. Brendle Museum
Historic Schaefferstown

Based upon the translation and cultural contextualization of primary source German language manuscripts, ranging from 1775 to 1900, this exhibit will examine the ways in which the literature and material culture of folk medicine expresses a highly-developed, consistent system of ritual mechanics in folk process, dependent upon the integration of cosmological, religious, and pre-scientific beliefs. The author's one-on-one training in the oral tradition by a powwow practitioner living in Berks County will also be discussed as an important point of reference for the interpretation of these historic primary sources.

A chair used specifically for powwowing, upon which patients were seated. Although appearing to be a normal chair in all respects, the following symbolism is attributed to it: The red paint symbolized the blood of Christ; the two arches in the cresting rail - the two tablets of the law given to Moses; the two large vertical stiles - the pillars of the church; the three vertical spindles - the apostle Paul, Jesus and Peter, the Rock; the front lower stretcher - the Judas the betrayer (upon which the patient should rest her right foot in disdain); the three rings on the legs - the Holy Trinity; and the low construction of the chair was to humble the patient to receive healing.

The ritual tradition of rural Pennsylvania Dutch folk culture, known as *die Braucherei* in the local dialect and Powwow in English, is a folk practice that blends elements of traditional medicine, folk religion, and sympathetic magic for the healing of illnesses among humans and livestock, as well as for protection from criminal violence and malicious spiritual forces.

Braucherei literally implies from its German linguistic origin a comingling of customs, traditions, ceremonies, and rites, derived from the *Pennsylvaanisch* "*brauche*" (to need, to use or employ), as well as the Standard German "*Bräuche*," (customs, traditions) and *Gebrauch* (ceremony or ritual). Many aspects are derived from folk-religious observations of the liturgical year and the almanac, as well as day-to-day use of benedictions and charms for a wide range of ailments, both spiritual and physical.[1]

A folk practitioner of *Braucherei* is referred to as a *Braucherin* if female, and a *Braucher* if male, or as a *powwower* or *powwow* doctor in English.[2] The term "powwow" does not imply that these traditional healing methods are Native American in origin. In fact, the word was used by English-speaking Pennsylvanians in the early 19th century to describe the seemingly exotic practices of the Pennsylvania Dutch. These practices, which blend applications of benedictions, gestures, and physical agents, as well as celestial and calendric observances, are manifestations of a comprehensive system of belief that encompasses domestic, agricultural, and spiritual life.

Although the earliest known sources of the ritual culture of *Braucherei* in Pennsylvania date to the colonial period,[3] the practice continues to persist into the present day, despite patterns of cultural assimilation. In addition, although these practices tend to be concentrated in the core region of southeastern Pennsylvania, they are not limited to Pennsylvania, or even North America, and have been found in many places where the influence of the Germanic diaspora spread, including the South, Appalachia, the Ozarks, the Midwest, the Dakotas, Ontario, and Brazil.[4] As a result of the diversity of ritual processes, the spread of geographical locations, and the three-century-span of Germanic cultural presence in the western hemisphere, a wide range of potential opportunities exist for the folk-cultural study of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Since the rise of the folklife movement in Pennsylvania in the 1950s, serious attention has been given to the subject of folk medicine and folk religion, and this initial investment of attention has produced a resurgence in the last decade, wherein over twenty books and articles have explored the topic of esoteric medicine in various fields and disciplines, including ethnography, consumer health, linguistics, history, material culture, and literature.[5]

Despite this apparent breadth of opportunity, a number of significant challenges fundamentally complicate the acquisition and interpretation of primary source research materials on the subject. Although gaining access to or obtaining original manuscripts, ritual artifacts, and rare books can be an arduous and expensive task for the researcher, harder still is gaining first-hand experience encountering folk ritual practice and its accompanying corpus of non-published oral tradition held in common by the community of living folk practitioners in the present day. By word of mouth, these traditions have passed from one practitioner to the next through the memorization of prayers and their symbolic interconnectivity with the ritual process of *Braucherei*.

The oral tradition comprises perhaps the single-most comprehensive cultural repository for ritual experience, and yet is guarded by protocol which determines the manner and frequency of how that information can be transmitted,

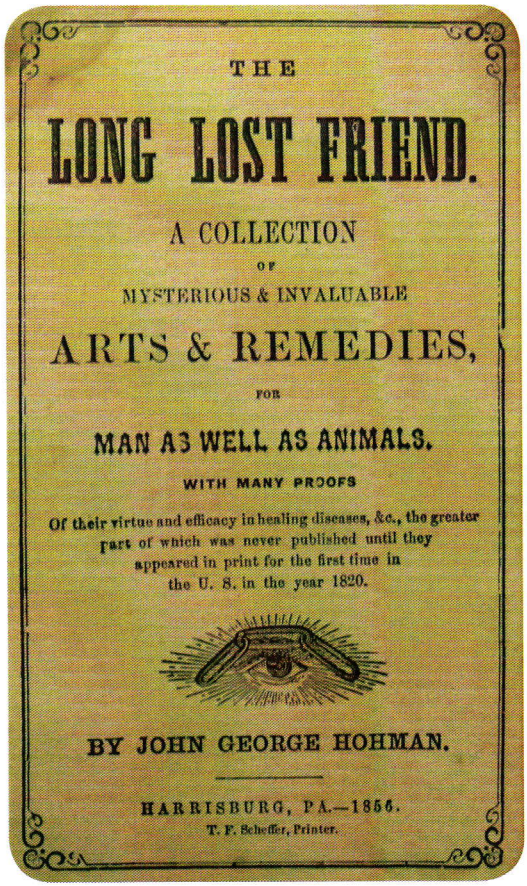


Arzneÿ Büchlein für Menschen und Vieh, Gehört Georg Henninger, ANNO Domini 1775. (*Little Book of Medicine for Man and Beast, Belonging to George Henninger, in the Year of Our Lord 1775) [Albany Township, Berks County] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer*

Medical manuscript is one of the earliest known collections of powwow cures, comprised of contents derived from *Kurtzgefasstes Arznei Büchlein für Menschen und Vieh,* first printed in Vienna, and later reprinted for the second time at Ephrata in 1791. The book contains chapters for Horses, Cows, Pigs, and Humans. Henninger's content is expanded, and includes entries not found in the Ephrata imprint. Henninger also includes an untitled section of protective prayers and inscriptions against all forms of calamity and criminal violence, instructions for compelling thieves to return stollen property, and incantations for stopping blood, burns, and convulsions.

coupled with a strong admonition against putting such memorized content into written form, except for personal reference. Among the Pennsylvania Dutch, this protocol requires a female practitioner to teach a male initiate, or vise-versa, a male to teach a female (and usually the bulk of this oral material is in the local *Pennsylvaanisch* dialect).

The only rare exception to this particular manner of gender-specific transmission is when the tradition is held closely within a family, and whether by passive or active learning, the younger generations are able to gain firsthand experience from older generations regardless of gender. More commonly today, however, is the memory of such practices having declined or disappeared within families where descendants of the appropriate gender were unavailable or unwilling to learn. The rapidly widening gap between the older native speakers of the dialect and subsequent generations also contributes to complications in transmission of the practice.


THE

LONG LOST FRIEND.

A COLLECTION

OF

MYSTERIOUS & INVALUABLE

ARTS & REMEDIES,

FOR

MAN AS WELL AS ANIMALS.

WITH MANY PROOFS

Of their virtue and efficacy in healing diseases, &c., the greater part of which was never published until they appeared in print for the first time in the U. S. in the year 1820.

BY JOHN GEORGE HOHMAN.

HARRISBURG, PA.—1856.

T. F. Scheffer, Printer.

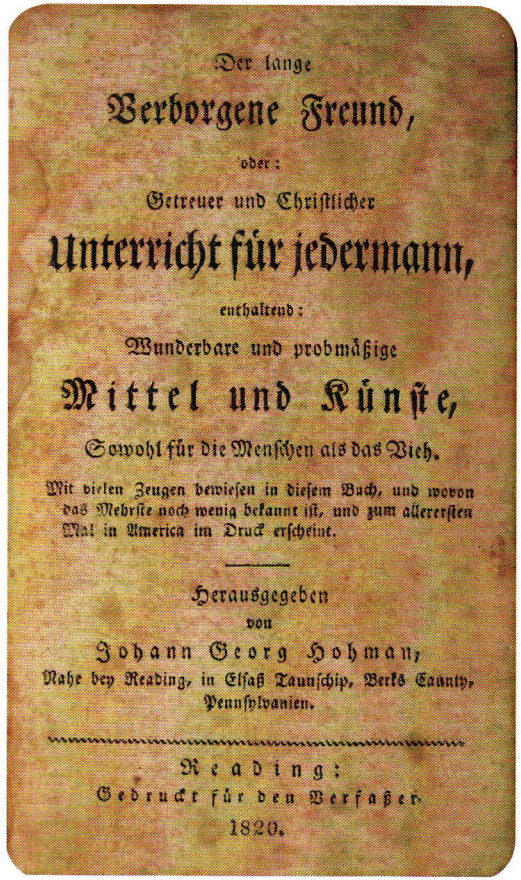
Johann Georg Hohman's *The Long Lost Friend*) Harrisburg, PA: Theodore F. Scheffer, 1856. Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

In keeping with this traditional format, one who is interested in learning *Braucherei* is typically taught only under the condition that it be learned for the sake of being practically used, and not merely to satisfy intellectual curiosity, academic interest, or what is considered worse – publication, and public scrutiny. As a result, many academics who are forthright about their interests struggle to find willing teachers or informants in the oral traditions.[6]

In keeping with current best practices for research ethics involving human subjects and ethnic communities, some academics who have received such culturally sensitive training have set a precedent for the degree to which initiation into oral tradition can serve to inform and undergird research, while remaining honoringly unwritten.[7] Still others in recent years have knowingly taken a different and controversial approach to the collection of sensitive information, and have conscientiously departed from traditional protocol in order to publish written renditions of the oral tradition.[8]

For the purpose of this particular exhibit, the author, who received training in the oral tradition from a Berks County practitioner in the winter of 2006, will not include in this exhibition booklet any material specifically learned from the oral tradition in keeping with the protocol communicated to him at the time of training. Likewise, the direct citation of any other written materials which contain portions of the oral tradition has been deliberately avoided and omitted for two reasons.

First, the author maintains that the value of applying a methodological approach that is both culturally sensitive and consistent with the traditional framework of the teachings far outweighs any perceived benefits derived from the publication of sensitive materials, which are not essential to the description and study of the practice as a whole. Secondly, in every instance where the author has come across published renditions of the prayers contained in the oral tradition, the presentation and application of this material has been inherently problematic, both linguistically and symbolically, to a degree that the author does not recognize it as accurately representing a coherent and nuanced whole. In addition, certain symbolic relationships which the author considers to be essential to the ritual process appear to have been entirely omitted or overlooked.

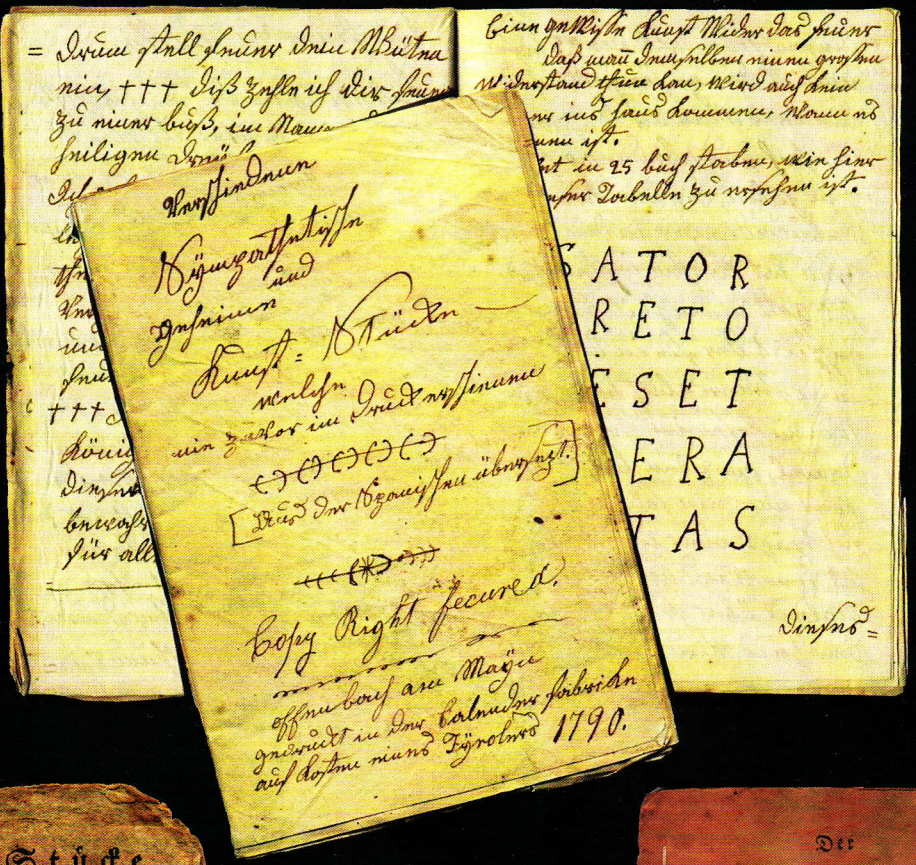

Der lange
Verborgene Freund,
oder:
Getreuer und Chriſtlicher
Unterricht für jedermann,
enthaltend:
Wunderbare und probmäßige
Mittel und Künſte,
Sowohl für die Menſchen als das Vieh,
Mit vielen Zeugen bewieſen in dieſem Buch, und wovon das Mehrſte noch wenig bekannt iſt, und zum allererſten Mal in America im Druck erſcheint.
Herausgegeben
von
Johann Georg Hohman,
Nahe bey Reading, in Elſaß Taunſchip, Berks Caunty, Pennſylvanien.
Reading:
Gedruckt für den Verfaßer.
1820.

Johann Georg Hohman's *Der lange Verborgene Freund* (*The Long Lost Friend*) 1819-1820, [Reading, PA] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

For these reasons, the approach and interpretation of the research materials presented here will be informed by oral tradition to inform the approach and interpretation of, while making no direct or indirect quotations or references to sensitive materials. Furthermore, a reader who may have interest in learning more about the oral tradition is encouraged to forge a connection with a living practitioner, and in so doing, forge a valuable and transformative connection with the community and the culture at large.

Although discussions of research ethics may seem like a purely contemporary set of concerns, the issues surrounding disclosure and protocol are anything but new. In fact sources confirm that the printing of the most popular folk healing manual in North America in 1820 was surrounded with a similar controversy nearly 200 years ago. *Der lange Verborgene Freund*, compiled by Johann Georg Hohman in 1819, and later appearing in English under the well-known title *The Long Lost Friend* in 1840,[9] contains prayers, benedictions, and rituals, a portion of which were collected by Hohman and previously had been entirely in the realm of oral tradition or contained in private diaries.

The remainder of this collection was directly plagiarized from an 18th century collection of ritual processes called *das Romanus-Büchlein*, or *The Little Book of the Gypsies*,[10] portions of which had previously been published in Reading, under the title *Das Vortreffliche Zigeunger Büchlein*, or *The Splendid Little Book of the Gypsies*.[11] Hohman, an entrepreneurial compiler and publisher of printed material, admitted that a portion of his material was derived from the oral tradition in his forward:



Manuscript of *Various Sympathetic and Secret Formulas,* ca. 1828, Isaac N. Kilmer [Stouchsburg, Berks Co.]
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer
Isaac N. Kilmer's transcription of the 1805 Reading imprint by Jungman & Bruckman of *Verschiedene Sympathetische und Geheime Kunst-Stücke.* Note the transcribed "Copyright Secured" on the front of Kilmer's pirated transcription.

Verschiedene sympathetische und geheime Kunst-Stücke (Various Sympathetic and Secret Magical Formulae) ca. 1800.
PA German Cultural Heritage Center
Kutztown University
Containing the false imprint "Egypt: Printed for the Gypsy King," with a woodcut of the Gypsy King, complete with book and stylus.

Der Freund in der Noth (The Friend in Need) 1813, [Reading, Pennsylvania]
PA German Cultural Heritage Center
Kutztown University
A lesser-known collection of cures and rituals, compiled by Johann Georg Hohman in 1813, printed by Johann Ritter of the *Readinger Adler.* Contents are identical to the *Kunst-Stücke.*

> "I had not wanted to allow it to be printed, and my wife also opposed it, but my compassion for my fellow man was too great...I ask thee once again, friend, male or female, is it not at present an eternal praise for me that I have permitted such books to be printed? Do I deserve no reward from God on account of it?" [12]

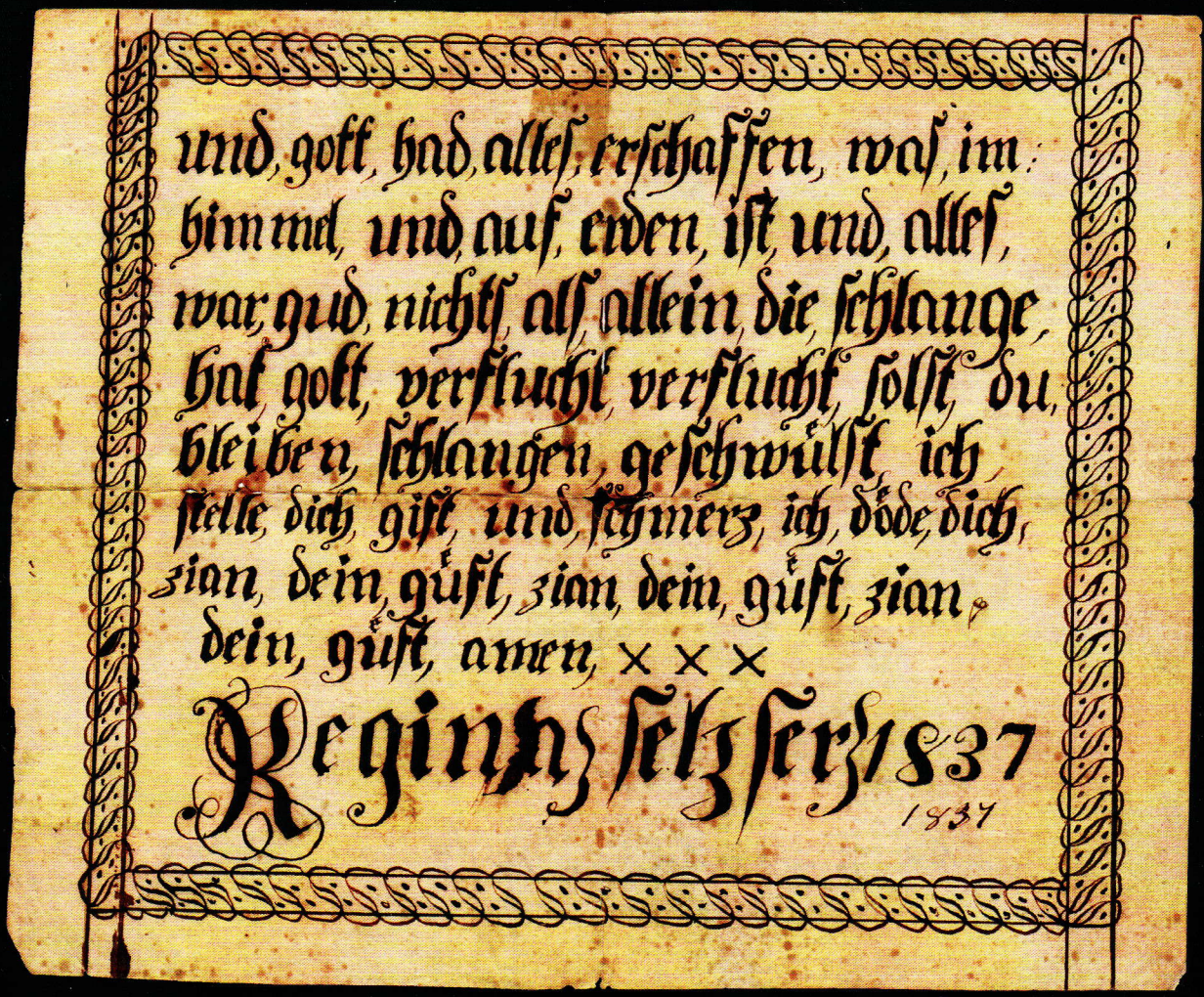
In Hohman's introduction, amongst a series of testimonials on the efficacy of ritual process dated 1812-1819, Hohman's wife Catharina is mentioned in the earliest instance listed of Hohman's witnessing esoteric healing.[13] One could therefore justifiably ponder whether or not Catharina, also identified as a practitioner, could have been the individual responsible for teaching Hohman in the first place, adding a new dimension to her concerns over his publication.

However altruistic Hohman's desire may have initially been to help others through the publication of sensitive cultural material, it is undeniable that Hohman's collected works, and those who have followed in his footsteps, have enabled generations of practitioners, and more recently academics, to access this material without the cultural context of direct interaction with a community and to essentially bypass the traditional folk-cultural framework. As a result, a disembodied corpus of ritual literature exists, stripped of its place within a larger system of beliefs.

In some cases, this has also exposed the tradition to the ridicule and sensationalism of journalists, who through scathing editorials have done unforeseen damage to the image of the culture in the public imagination of America at large.[14] This disembodied literature has also revealed itself as the source of much abuse and fetishization of the tradition, such as in the case of the tragic murder of Nelson Rehmeyer in York County in 1928, when an attempt to steal his copy of Hohman's book to break the power of a curse resulted in his death.[15]

Some have argued positively that Hohman's works have served to perpetuate and preserve traditional healing, which is perceived by some to be in a state of decline. This contradictory approach to "cultural preservation," at once both Machiavellian and fatalistic, has attempted to prematurely embalm the body of ritual folk culture, long before any actual demise of the tradition has occurred. The role of Hohman's work, and other powwow manuals of a similar genre, have historically been over-emphasized in the study of folk culture, when in the eyes of the folk, dependence upon literature in ritual process is not looked upon favorably.[16] The scholarly dependence upon printed literature for folk cultural analysis is understandable however, as it is symptomatic of the challenges inherent in the acquisition of primary sources.

In a similar manner to other written sources, manuscript material can also present a number of inherent challenges related to the degree of context included in the body of the work. Many of these issues are intimately connected with the personal nature of the manuscripts that were produced by practitioners of folk ritual, which were created, not for posterity, but for private reference. Some of these vary considerably in scope, ranging from notations in the margins of farm ledgers, to full-length collections of ritual processes containing dozens of entries. Some manuscripts, while positively rife with folk-cultural material, lack basic information regarding their provenance, such as dates, names, or locations, and thus their value can be limited in a general sense. Even when such information is present, the overwhelming majority of these texts are in early, non-standardized forms of German, which can vary considerably in spelling, sentence structure, and vocabulary, making translation a difficult process even for those who are well-versed in modern German. Only rarely are written sources composed in the *Pennsylvaanisch* dialect, which was almost exclusively a spoken



Snake Bite Charm of Regina Selzser, [Jackson Township, Lebanon County] 1837 - Roughwood Collection of Don Yoder

"And God created everything that is in heaven and on earth, and everything was good, except that God cursed the snake. Cursed shalt thou remain, snake! Swelling, I still thee! Poison and pain, I destroy thee! Withdraw thy poison, withdraw thy poison, withdraw thy poison, Amen. XXX Regina Selzser 1837"



Manuscript for Protection, Georg Börstler, 1830 [Exeter Township, Berks County] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Protective letter from the European book of folk medicine entitled *Das Romanus Büchlein* (Little Book of the Gypsies) and later with Johann Georg Hohman's *Der Lang Verborgene Freund* (The Long Lost Friend). The cryptic abbreviations are associated with both protection from enemies, and the stopping of blood from wounds.

language until the end of the 19th century. However, in contrast, today much of the oral tradition is spoken in the dialect, demonstrating the interrelation of official forms and folk uses of language.

Perhaps most difficult of all is interpreting material which provides verbal, gestural, and physical components of the ritual process, and yet no documentation exists to explain how the ritual was expected to work, or why certain components of the ritual were used to address particular ailments or times of need. This paper will examine selections from twelve manuscripts, ranging from 1775 to 1900, the majority of which are from Berks County, Pennsylvania, and demonstrate the ways in which the rituals described therein present a consistent esoteric system of beliefs, based in a folk-religious and cosmological worldview. In accordance with the warnings of certain ethnographers to avoid systematizing ritual elements beyond the degree to which the folk imagination conceives of them,[17] this study will not seek to forcibly unify these rituals with a pre-existing framework, whether occult, religious, ancient or otherwise. Instead, the items in each manuscript will be analyzed in terms of function, identifying key components that illustrate the ways in which the ritual was expected to work, and in so doing, offer by degrees, a measure of how the ritual examples affirm beliefs concerning how the cosmos was perceived to function.

Although terms like worldview, structures of belief, and cosmology are not by any means a normal part of a folk vocabulary, it is not uncommon to find ritual instructions, prayers, or benedictions that refer directly to the cosmos and the belief in a divine presence in the forces of creation. An elaborate manuscript inscribed for Regina Selzser of Jackson Township, Lebanon County in 1837 describes a benediction for treating snakebite begins with such a statement:

Und Gott had alles erschafen was in Himmel und auf erden ist, und alles war gud, nicht als allein die schlange had Gott verflucht, verflucht solst du bleiben schlangen, geschwülst ich stelle dich, gift und schmertz ich döde dich, zian dein gift, zian dein gift, zian dein gift amen X X X. Regina Selzser 1837

And God created all things in heaven and on earth, and everything was good, except for thee, Snake, which God cursed, and cursed shalt thou remain. Swelling I halt thee, poison and pain, I destroy thee. Withdraw thy poison, withdraw thy poison, withdraw thy poison, Amen, [in the name of God the father, and of the son, and of the son, and of the holy spirit X X X. Regina Selzser 1837

Above all other aspects of the ritual process described above, the opening declaration, derived from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, immediately places the afflicted person within an ordered, sacred universe. Conversely in the statement which follows, the incident of the snakebite and the resulting physical affliction are identified with an aberration of creation.[18] This cosmic dissonance resonates not merely for the afflicted person present at the time of the ritual's performance, but framed through the expression of religious truth, the experience takes on a larger dimension of the universal pain of a fallen humanity. It would be reasonable to posit that these statements, which identify the source of the natural world as the work of a supernatural creator, are intended to overcome the cause and effect of the natural world with the truth of a higher supernal reality (i.e. the Trinitarian invocation represented by "XXX," which abbreviates the three highest names and the liturgical gesture of the sign of the cross three times). It is equally relevant to consider the popularity of macrocosmic theology among the Pennsylvania Dutch at the time of the recording of this ritual, when common household prayer books in the 19th century included the works of mystics such as Johann Arndt, which were printed locally in Allentown and Philadelphia,[19] the latter of which was published by none other

than Benjamin Franklin himself. The application of macrocosmic interpretation would offer that suffering is alleviated through the experience of the creator being present in both the cause and the effect, an awareness which is transformative, mitigating what theologian Paul Tillich would later call "the consequences of existential estrangement," that is, ultimately in this case, the estrangement of man from the God.[20]

While the biblical underpinnings of this particular snakebite ritual are consistent with the doctrinal and theological interpretation of the official protestant faiths present in Pennsylvania at the time of the ritual's record, it is important to note that the actual cure itself, while based in biblical literature, does not specifically make use of any particular method of ritual curing which is described in biblical passages, such as the curing of the snakebites of the people of Israel by Moses, who received specific instructions concerning how to do so directly from God in the wilderness.[21] However, numerous rituals which make use of direct scriptural quotations and processes concerning the miracles of Christ are recorded, along with the previous snake bite cure, in the folk healing works of Dr. Georg Friedrich Helfenstein printed in Central Pennsylvania in the early-19th century, which have recently been translated by the author and are currently awaiting publication.[22] In his work *Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God Alone), the pseudonymous Helfenstein includes another cure which begins in the same manner as the previous, only this time it is intended to address fever:

> For fever, call the baptismal name of the sick person three times and say the following words:
> Heaven and Earth were created, and everything was good. Everything made by God is good, and only the fever is a plague. Therefore, yield from me, depart from me, remove yourself and vanish from me, fly to the highest mountains and thou shalt withdraw into the depths, withdraw from me in the name of John the Holy Apostle, and Jesus Christ the Son of God.[23]

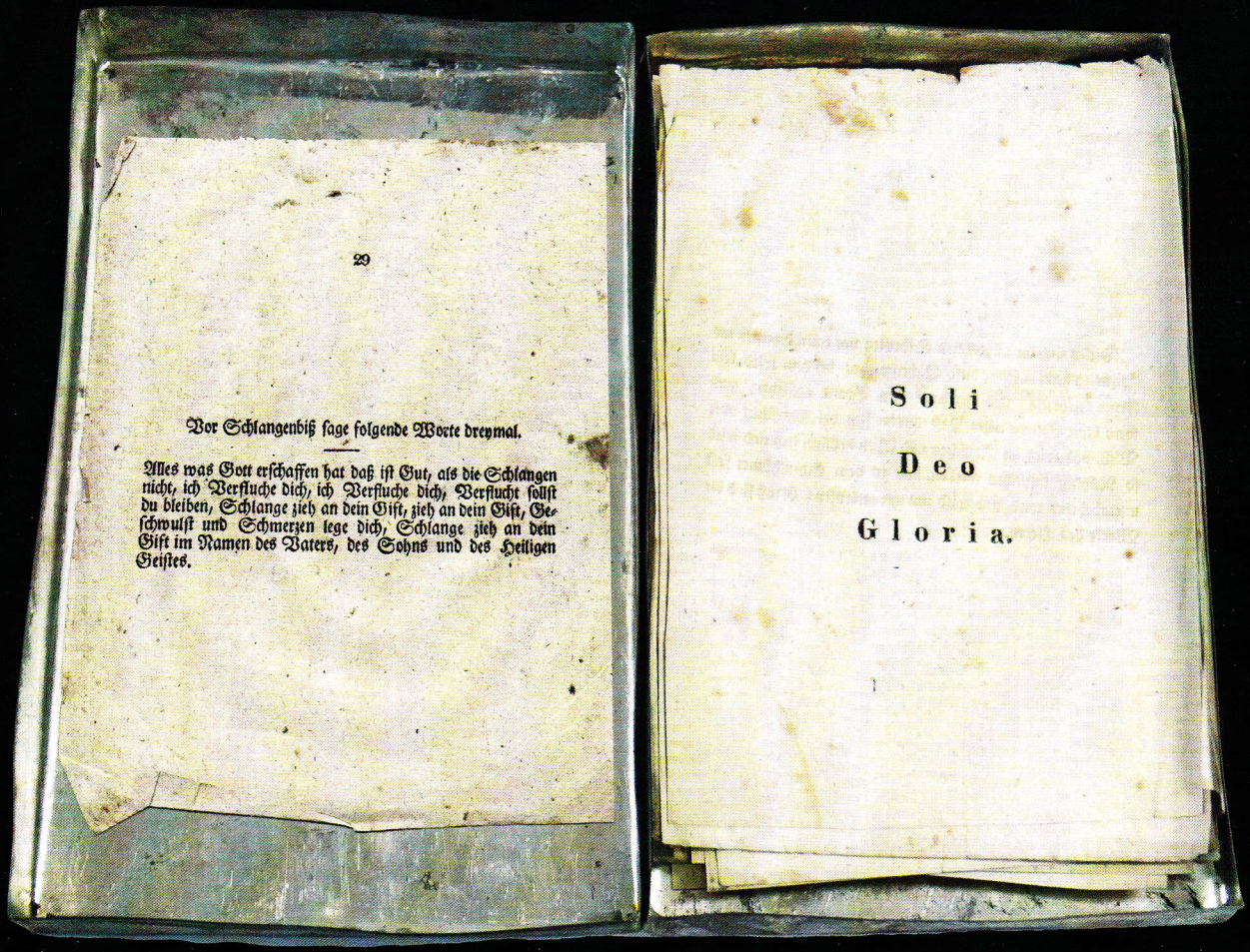
In each of these instances, the source of affliction is called by name animistically and commanded to depart; only the latter example banishes the illness to locations of extreme height and depth, representing the extremes of the earthly kingdom. In some instances in Pennsylvania, this idea of using geographic locations to harbor illness or evil spirits was believed to be physically enacted by practitioners, such as in the case of *Hexenkopf* Hill in Williams Township, Northampton County, the site of the ritual operations of the notorious Johann Peter Saylor (1721-1803) and his son Peter (1770-1862).[24]

However literal the interpretation of some practitioners may have been in regards to banishing illness into physical locations, Helfenstein explains the reference to the mountain and the depths in his introduction through the words of Christ in the Gospel of Mark:

> Have faith in God. For verily I say unto thee, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; and he shall have whatsoever he saith. [25]

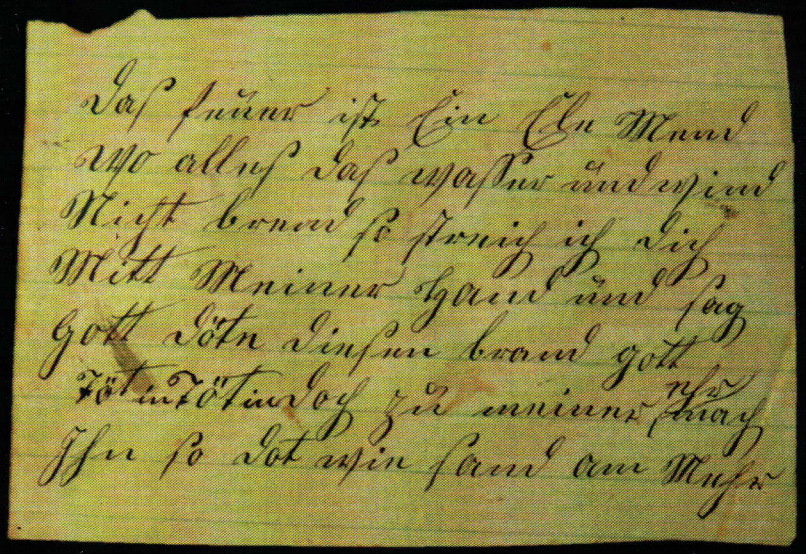
Within the context of the biblical story, these words of Christ are not merely meant as an inspirational passage, but as an explanation of the subordination of creation to the will of God, exhibited in the preceding verses when Christ cursed the fig tree in Jerusalem and it withered the following morning.[26]

This notion of positioning a religious statement against physical affliction, or likening a particular doctrinal statement to the removal of illness, is consistent with the philosophy of sympathy – a term readily employed in the literature of Pennsylvania folk medicine, and exhibited in titles such as *Der Freund in der Noth, oder geheime sympathetische wissenschaft* (*The Friend in Need, or Secret Sympathetic Knowledge*); "*Haus-Schatz der Sympathie*" (*Household Treasury of Sympathy*); *Der Sympathetischer Künstler*



Soli Deo Gloria, or The Secrets of Sympathy of Dr. Helfenstein, ca. 1820 [Sunbury, Northumberland Co.] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

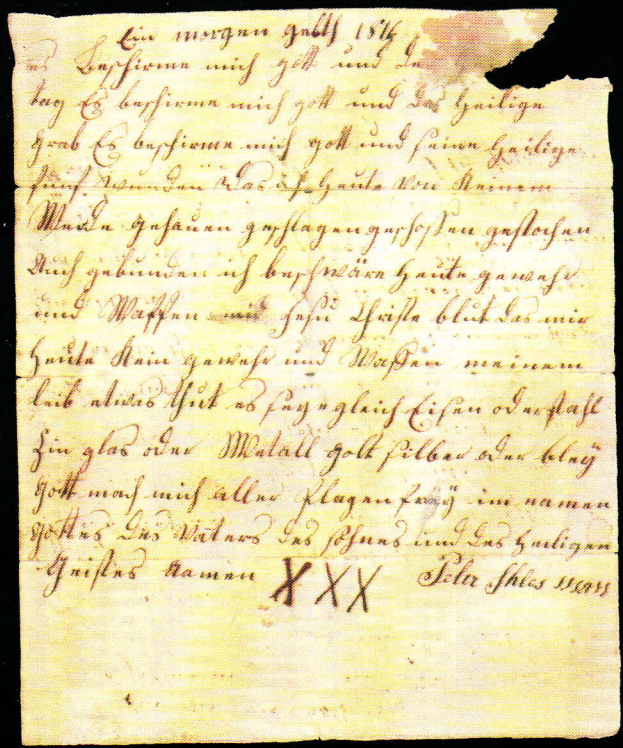
A rare unbound book of cures entitled *Glory to God Alone*, attributed to Dr. Georg Friedrich Helfenstein, a medical doctor educated in the Netherlands, who becomes a practitioner of spiritual healing methods, after a mysterious "gray man" teaches him the "secrets of sympathy" and vanishes before his very eyes. Comprised of three books: the first containing religious blessings to be used in healing the sick; the second, rituals for assistance in times of need, protection from violence, stopping theives, etc.; the third, blessings for animals and livestock. The introduction is signed "J. H. Helfenstein" and is sealed with two wax seals depicting a fox and a lion. The unbound collection was issued as broadsides, which could be removed from the collection, and used as talismans or applied in healing rituals. Around a dozen copies are known in Pennsylvania, most of which are enclosed in decorative paper or tin boxes for safekeeping.

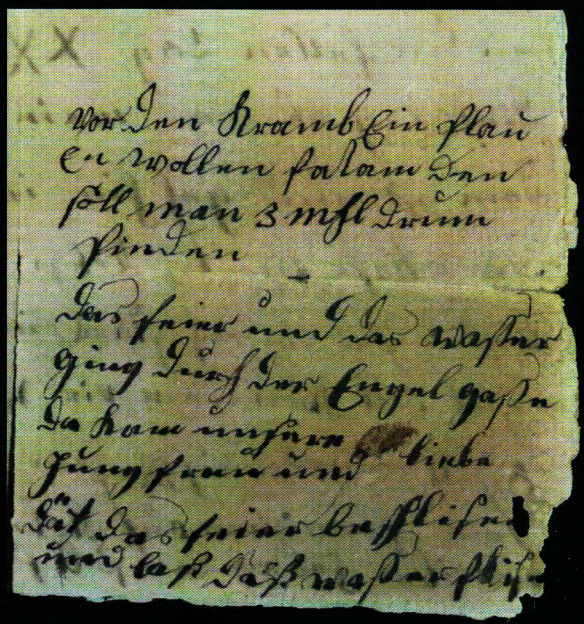


Rhyming Cure for Burn Invoking the Elements
ca. 1880, Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Das Feuer ist Ein Ele Mend
Wo alles das Wasser und Wind nicht brend
so streich ich dich mit meiner Hand
und sag Gott döte diesen Brand
Gott Töt in, Töt in, doch zu meiner ehr,
Mach Ihn so dot wie sand am Mehr.

Fire is an element
Which burneth not water and wind
So I pass over thee with my hand
And ask God to destroy this brand.
God destroy it, destroy it, though to my honor
Make it so dead as the sand at the sea.





Two Manuscripts of Peter Schlessmann, 1816 [Bethel Township, Berks County] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

From Left To Right:

"A Morning Prayer 1816 - God and the Holy Day protect me, God and the Holy Grave protect me, God and the Holy Five Wounds protect me that I will be slashed, struck, shot, stabbed, or bound by no one today. Today I abjure all weapons and arms by the Blood of Jesus Christ, that no weapons or arms can harm my body today, be it iron, or steel, tin, glass or metal, gold, silver or lead. God make me free of all afflictions, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. X X X Peter Schlesmann"

A Cure for Menstrual Cramps, involving the use of a blue string, and the invoking and balancing the elements of fire and water.

(*The Sympathetic Practitioner*).[27] According to sympathetic theory, all manifestations of the physical world are interconnected by subtle means through celestial and divine workings, a doctrine which was conventionally accepted in the medicine and philosophy of the 17th century.[28] In applications of *Braucherei* prayers and benedictions, verbal statements serve to invoke sympathetic relationships, with religious language, or celestial imagery:

> Christ upon the cross was hanged, and thy bone is sprained. It harmed him not, thus shall thy sprain harm thee not, in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [29]

> May [the bullet] turn away from me, powder and lead, as the sun turneth away from the moon.[30]

Whether the intention was to subordinate earthly experience to religious doctrine or contextualize it within the macrocosm, it is true that many of these statements containing religious symbolism point to a sense of mutability in the physical world. It is equally common to find statements, such as the previous sympathetic injunction of a bullet, which point to the certainty of the celestial sphere and earthly elements. The same applies to the following cure for burns:

Das Feuer ist ein Ele Mend,
Wo alles das Wasser und Wind nicht brend,
So streich ich dich mit meiner Hand,
Und Sag Gott döte diesen Brand.
Gott töt in, töt in, doch zu meiner Ehr,
Mach ihn so Dot wie Sand am Mehr.

The fire is an element
Which burneth not water and wind,
Thus I pass over thee with my hand,
And ask God to destroy this burn,
Destroy it, destroy it, though to my honor,
Make it as dead as the sand by the sea.[31]

Burn-cures often make use of blowing over the afflicted part of the body three times,[32] physically invoking the element of air to remove the heat of the burn. The use of the four elements is not to be thought of as functioning independently of the divine, but rather through divine direction, as specified in many prayers, such as this remedy for menstrual cramps recorded by Peter Schlessman (1769-1828) from Bethel Township, Berks County in 1816:

> *Vor den Kramb, Ein plauen wollen fatam den soll man 3 m[a]hl drum pinden: Das feier und das waser ging durch der Engel Gasse da kam unsere liebe Jungfrau und dät das feier beschlisen und lass das wasser flisen.*
>
> For Cramps, [take] a blue wollen string, then one shall wrap the string around [the afflicted person]: Fire and water flow through the angel-path, then came our dear Virgin, and she would extinguish the fire, and let the water flow.[33]

In each of the previous two instances, the inherent balance of the elements is believed to regulate and establish balance within the body of the person, as is intended here for painful menstruation, where the fire is likened to the pain of cramps, and the water, the establishment a regular flow. Although there exist rituals for regulation of both the congestion of menstrual flow and the overabundance of flow in other collections of benedictions,[34] this particular ritual is less specialized in its written composition.

Notably, the use of color in this particular passage, likewise expresses a sympathetic alignment between the blue woolen string and the elemental quality of water. The use of string in ritual practice appears frequently in situations where a drawing or flowing action is required to restore health, which is connected with the linear, directional, and connective quality of fiber. This action can pertain to the withdrawing of an illness, as well as the regulation of normal bodily functions.

A classic example of the use of red string is in ritual descriptions of drawing out the inflammation of erysipelas or wildfire (*Wildfeier)* characterized by an extreme inflammation and swelling infection of the skin. Because of the

tendency of this condition to rapidly spread, the name *Rotlauf* is also used, as it literally describes the disease as a "running-redness." As the infection can quickly run out of control, mortality rates had been estimated to be as high as one-third prior to availability, even into the mid-19th century.[35] A detailed account of the ritual mitigation of wildfire can be found in the work of Conrad Reber (1778-1817), a braucher, horse doctor, and farrier from Tulpehocken, Berks County:

> *Ein Mittel für das wilte Feuer: Nim ein Rother seiten fatem und fang Miten auf dem Kohpf an, und fahr hinten nunder. Sage rother seiten fatem zick, zick, zick. Biß die 3 worten gesprochen seÿn so muß man mit dem fatem unter den füsen vor sein und so 3 mahl und dan nimm wieder ein andern seiden fatem und fang wieder so auf dem Kopf an und sag Wilth Feuer flick, flick, flick, und fahr mit dem fatem das sehm als wie der forig mahl das muß von einem stronig seiten sein wo wan noch nichts gebraucht ist und darf auch nichts gebraucht werten die fatem wo man mit braucht hingt man in den schorn stein brauche es 3 mahl wan es nicht aus das 1 mal weg geth man muß sich Nacket auf thun wan er's brauch[t].*
>
> A Remedy for the Wild-Fire: Take a red silk string and begin upon the middle of the head, and draw it down behind. Say "Red Silk String, Zick, Zick, Zick." Until these words are spoken, so must one be down before the feet with the string, and then take again another silk string and begin again thusly upon the head and say "Wild Fire, Flick, Flick, Flick," and draw with the string in the same manner as the previous time. This must be of a strong silk that has not yet been used, and also the string should be unused when one works with it. One shall hang the string in a good fire, and work the charm 3 times, and if the illness does not go away the first time, one must have the person take off their clothes and be naked when one works.[36]

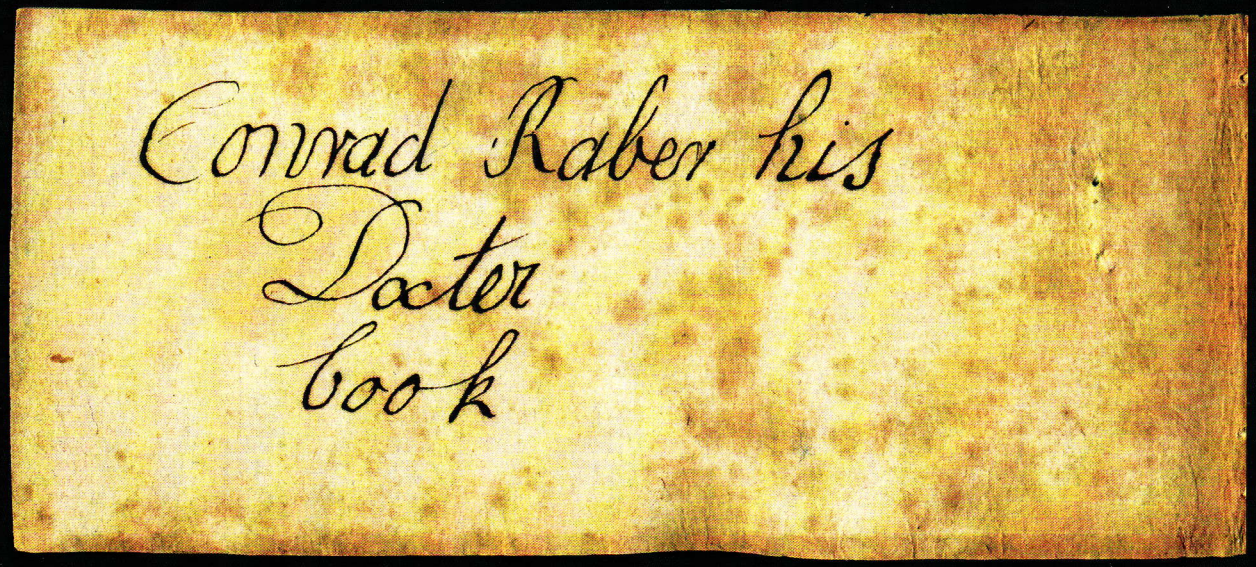
Reinforcing the idea of directional flow in the sympathetic use of string, Reber's method involves the hanging of the string in the chimney during a strong fire, which would "smoke" the string, and carry away the illness, where the chimney serves as a conduit to remove the illness. Interestingly enough, Reber's use of *"Zick, Zick, Zick"* is a contracted echo of earlier forms of the command *"zieh an dein Gift"* (withdraw thy poison) included in the aforementioned ritual for snakebite, and also included in Hohman as *"Zing, Zing, Zing!"* These three variations demonstrate the difficulties of preserving oral tradition in writing, as truncated, abbreviated, or corrupted forms are inevitably preserved in mistranscription for posterity. Likewise Reber's *"Flick, Flick, Flick"* is a contraction of the dialect phrase *"Flieg weck"* (Fly away). In these examples, it is apparent that some instances of what may be perceived as 'magic words' are ultimately derived from grammatically correct phrases lost in transcription.

Reber also includes an alternate remedy, involving a repetition of the red or fiery motif, where the inflammation is attracted to its sympathetic equivalent. The idea of "like attracts like" is essential to many rituals, and in this case, an actual fiery substance is used to draw out the heat of the infection.

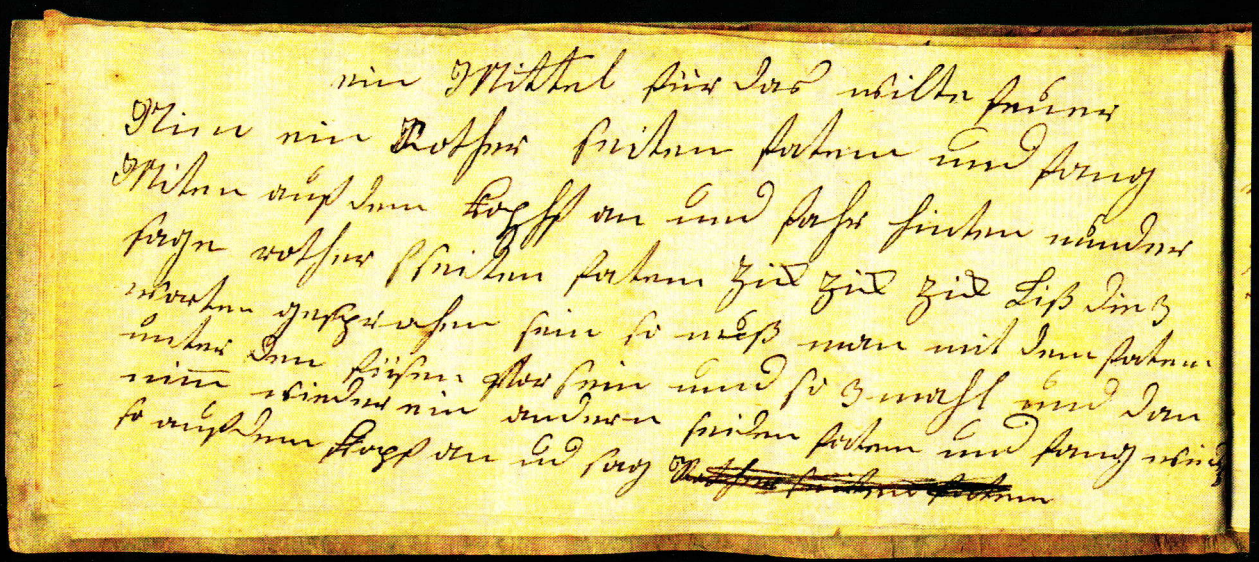
> When a person has wildfire: Then bend thou the person over, so far as possible, and do so prudently, and set the person before the mouth of the bake-oven, and hold fast to the base of the head and shovel the coals out over [and away from] them. Do this 3 times, thus shall it soon subside.[37]

Although Reber's previously cited cure for wildfire is highly performative, describing in detail the use of words, physical agents (string), gestures, and physical location (the hearth), this latter process is equally steeped in ritual elements, although there is no verbal component aside from the written description of the process itself. In the absence of verbal utterances, which offer some measure of context or explanation of other ritual elements, the mechanics of the ritual are not directly spelled out, but instead physically enacted. In these situations we must rely on the physical and gestural aspects of the process to discern their relationship to the illness within a cultural and esoteric context.

This ritual procedure makes use of



Conrad Raber his Docter book, ca. 1800 [Tulpehocken Township, Berks County] PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University
The pocket-sized medical book, comprised of incantations, sympathetic rituals, and chemical compounds for healing horses, cows and humans, belonging to Conrad Raber, a horse doctor and ferrier.







Aunt Sophia Bailer, Saint of the Coal Regions (1870-1954) ca. 1950, photographs by Don Yoder, Roughwood Collection

"Aunt" Sophia (Leininger) Bailer, braucherin from Tremont, Schuylkill County, participated annually in the Kutztown Folk Festival, discussing her powwowing techniques, or as she called it, "Calling a blessing." Sophia Bailer was an energetic and amicable person who helped in many ways to transform the public perception of powwow practitioners in the 20th century. Sophia represented her culture well, and reminded the public that many grandmothers in the Dutch country powwowed for common ailments and were well received in a positive light. This series of photographs depicts Sophia demonstrating the common powwow ritual for curing *Wildfeier* or erysipelas, an inflammatory infection of the skin. The process requires the use of a red woolen string.

(Clockwise From Top Left:) First, she transfers the illness to the string, by drawing it along the body; After accumulating the illness in the woolen string, Aunt Sophia sweeps the string away from the body three times, while addressing the illness and commanding it to depart from the child: "*Wildfeier, Wildfeier, Flieh, Flieh, Flieh! Der rote Fadem jagt dich hie, hie hie!*" (Erysipelas, Erysipelas, Fly, fly, fly! The red string chases you away, away, away!); After the removal of the illness from the body, Aunt Sophia "smokes the string" by holding it over an open burner on her wood-fired kitchen stove. This action serves to neutralize the illness; Aunt Sophia hangs the sting on a line above the stove, but she does not fasten it. The wool must fall before the boy can be rid of his ailment; When the wool has fallen to the floor, indicating that the child has begun to recover, Aunt Sopia carefully sweeps the string into a dustpan; The woolen string is burned in the kitchen stove, as a final measure.





posture, hand gestures, hot coals, a shovel, and physical location by the bake-oven for the removal of the illness. Perhaps one of the most fundamental aspects of the ritual which is not literally stated, but rather implied, is the significance of using one hand to grip the base of the person's head, while using the other hand to shovel the coals, wherein a conduit is created through the body of the practitioner for the movement of heat, out of the head of the sick person and following the direction of the coals. Symbolically, the heat of the coals is a property which is sympathetically aligned with the nature of the inflammation of wildfire. A traditional association of the right and left hands as being respectively active versus receptive, projective versus absorbing, allows the left hand to grip the head and absorb the heat, while the right hand shovels the coals over the body to release the heat. Another notable aspect in this equation is the belief that the heat must be drawn from a part of the body that is sympathetically aligned with the element fire, such as the head which is governed by the zodiacal sign of Aries, a fire sign.

This particular application of zodiacal correspondence is consistent with the use of the almanac in folk medicine, where the image of the cosmic man of signs depicts the progression of the zodiac upon the human body beginning with Aries in the head, and Pisces in the feet.[38] Although to a casual observer this common diagram would seem to imply that the appropriate time for treating illnesses would be when the afflicted part corresponds to the position of the moon within the sign, however, this is not the case. In fact, the opposite is true: the almanac advises *not* to treat the afflicted part of the body when the moon is in the corresponding sign - otherwise it was considered dangerous![39] These words are echoed in the pseudepigraphical works of Albertus Magnus, widely distributed in North America and Europe:



Albertus Magnus: das Buch Der Geheimnisse. Reading [Reutlingen]: Louis Enssling, 1852. (Not included in the exhibition)
PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University

Wer Arzney sich gebrauchet dar,
Und nicht der Zeichen wohl nimmt wahr,
Auch seine Sach nicht richt darnach,
der Leib gern, was kommt, Ungemach,
hüt dich, nicht laß das Glied an dir,
so das Zeichen die Adern rühr,
wie die Figur ausweiset gut,
so bleibt schon in gutter Hut.

He who would require medicine here,
and doth not choose the true sign well,
also his part not right therefore,
the body receives what misfortune befalls.
Hear, bleed thou not the part of thee,
as the vein the sign doth affect,
as the Figure revealeth well,
thus remaineth one well in good keeping.[40]

As with many agricultural societies, the Pennsylvania Dutch, possess a well-developed system of beliefs concerning the movements of the heavens and their effects on earthly processes, as well as animal and human affairs. While the bulk of these beliefs in Pennsylvania are

derived from the European agricultural almanac tradition, other influences such as folk religion, natural philosophy or folk science, as well as folk medicine contribute to the astronomical and astrological traditions of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The use of German language almanacs in Pennsylvania was well-established by the early 18th century with the transplanting of continental European printers and almanac makers to Philadelphia, providing a wealth of agricultural and domestic information to the German-speaking settlements. Each almanac was essentially an annual household reference booklet, including the liturgical church calendar of saints' days and festivals, charts of the lunar phases, the day to day progression of the zodiac constellations and planets, as well as calculations for the appearance of comets, eclipses, and other astronomical phenomena.[41]

The almanac was used to orchestrate the activities of daily life. Whether in planting or harvesting, felling trees or tilling the soil, baking bread or fermenting vinegar, breeding or slaughtering livestock, bearing children or getting married, there were believed to be appropriate days of the week, times of the month, phases of the moon, saints' days, or alignments of celestial bodies which would either positively or negatively affect the outcome of life's events. This system was an attempt to harmonize the progression of human life with the progression of the heavens, believed to be the manifestation and visible order of the divine will.[42]

Although the widespread distribution of farmer's almanacs corroborates the popular acceptance of such ideas, direct references to the zodiac in ritual process are rare and instead normally implied, whereas references to the moon and lunar phases are ubiquitous, and found in ritual processes ranging from the simplest to the most complex. A highly complex, undated example formerly from the Roughwood Collection of Dr. Don Yoder, takes these types of cosmological instructions to the extreme:

> Take a goose quill and cut it of[f] where it begins to be hollow then scrape off a little from each nail of the hands and feets [sic] put it into the quill & stop it up after bore a hole towards the rise of the sun into a tree that bears no fruit put the Quill with the scrapings of the nails into the Hole and with three strokes close up the Hole with a bung maid [sic] of pine wood It must be done on the first Friday in the New moon in the morning.[43]

While no title or explanation accompanies this set of instructions, the process clearly illustrates the practice of removing illness by plugging deposits into trees. This practice is well documented in Pennsylvania as well as the Ozarks,[44] and occasionally, such deposits are discovered when trees are cut down, as evidenced by a cross-section of a tree displayed in the Thomas Brendle Museum at Historic Schaefferstown in Lebanon County. Although this practice is assumed to proceed from an ancient source, and some have related it to protective rites derived from the worship of trees in pre-Christian times, these instructions would appear to indicate instead, that in this particular instance the tree is used as an object of transference, and that the illness is being sympathetically withdrawn from the person into the tree, by means of the nails from the hands and feet. Perhaps the most important piece of evidence indicating that the tree becomes the vessel of the illness is the cryptic admonition the tree must bear no fruit – negating the possibility that a human being would accidentally contract the illness by eating a piece of fruit.

The scheduling of the ritual within these particular cosmological constraints serves to articulate a portion of the folk-cultural beliefs surrounding the effect of the moon upon earthly affairs. The moon was believed to exert a particular force on the Earth which varied according to its phase: as the moon waxed (*Zunemme* in *Pennsylvaanisch*) to full, it was

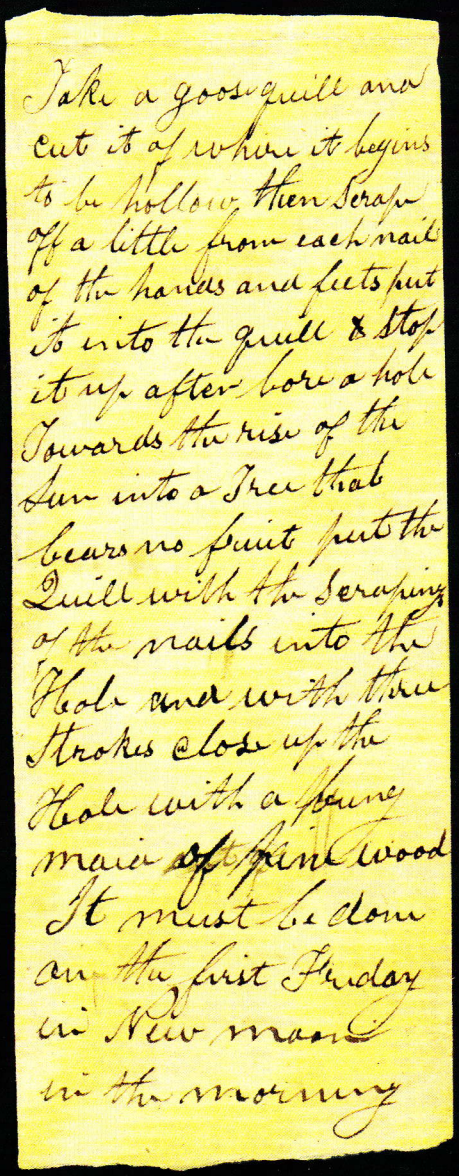
Manuscript Directions for Transfering Illness Into a Tree, ca. 1860-1880
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

These manuscript instructions provide a process for ritually transfering an illness into a tree. This tradition is well documented in Pennsylvania, and photographs of "plugged" trees have been taken in the mid-20th century.

"Take a goose quill and cut it of[f] where it begins to be hollow, then scrape off a little from each nail of the hands and feets put it into the quill & stop it up after bore a hole towards the rise of the sun into a tree that bears no fruit put the quill with the scraping of the nails into the hole and with three strokes close up the hold with a bung maid of pine wood. It must be done on the first friday in new moon in the morning."

The timing of this ritual was crucial, for the new moon was believed to exert a force down and inward, driving the illness into the tree, and that the movement of the sun westward would reinforce the same movement of the illness into the tree. Friday was considered a beneficial day to begin such an undertaking because of its association with the crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday, and the initiation of the salvation and healing of the world in Christian tradition.




Take a goose quill and
cut it of where it begins
to be hollow then Scrape
off a little from each nail
of the hands and feets put
it into the quill & stop
it up after bore a hole
towards the rise of the
Sun into a Tree that
bears no fruit put the
Quill with the Scraping
of the nails into the
Hole and with three
Strokes close up the
Hole with a bung
maid of pine wood
It must be done
on the first Friday
in New moon
in the morning

Left Above:

Plugged Oak Tree Remnant, Mid-19th century, [Schaefferstown, Lebanon County] Thomas R. Brendle Museum, Historic Schaefferstown

Discovered by a farmer chopping wood on a farm between Reistville and Schaefferstown, Lebanon County. According to local interpretation, the tree was believed to have been close to a century old when the peg and ritual deposit was placed for transferring illness into the tree, over a century prior to having been cut down. 120 annual growth rings were counted from the bark to the peg.

believed to exert a force which pulled away from the Earth, and as it waned (*Abnemme*) to the new moon, it exerted a force towards the Earth. This force was believed to be the strongest at either extreme. A whole series of behaviors and tasks were centered around this belief, especially as it pertained to farm work: in general the new moon was the time to establish, and the full moon was a time to uproot or harvest. Thus common tasks such as planting potatoes, setting fence-posts in the ground, or nailing roof shingles was done in the "dark of the moon" - a time when things are to be fixed in place.[45] Whereas, potatoes were best harvested in the waxing "light of the moon," along with other activities such as pruning trees and trimming one's hair - where the force of the moon was believed to encourage new growth. This upward and downward motion also played a role in the growth of plants, and anything that would grow upward or climb such as beans and corn were planted in the waxing moon, and carrots and beets, which grow down into the soil were planted in the waning moon.

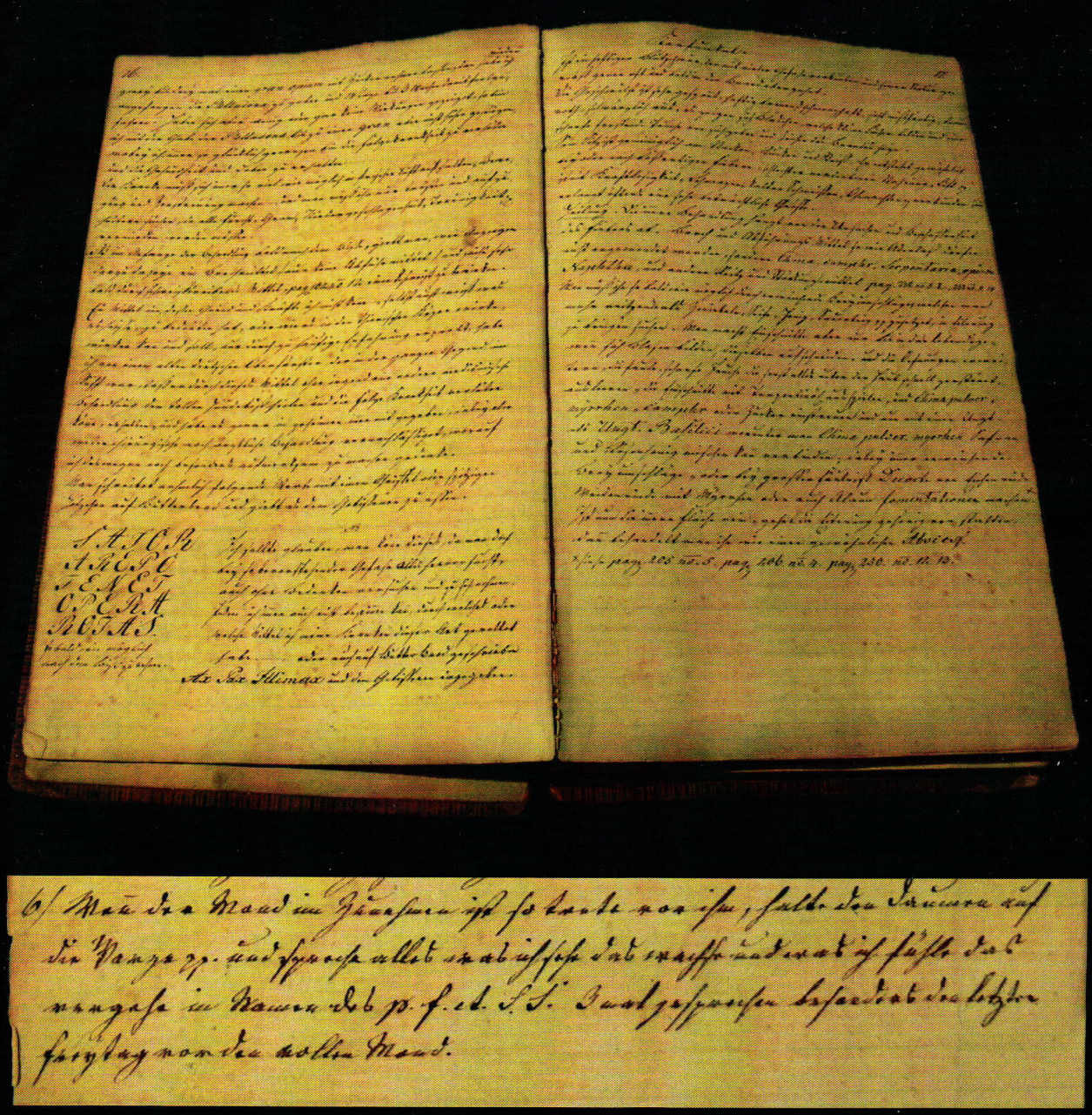
The use of the influence of the new moon in the case of plugging trees is appropriate, because the force of the moon is directed towards the earth, fixing the illness within the tree. As a corollary to this, it was believed to be beneficial and of good luck to cut one's nails in the waning moon, and would prevent nails from becoming ingrown.[46] In addition, the first Friday in the new moon was considered universally among the Pennsylvania Dutch to be the best day for healing[47] - and European folk process concerning ritual deposits in bushes and trees also make use of Friday as the preferable day for the work to be done, as well as the use of the direction of the rising sun as part of the sun's daily circuit as a feature common to such rituals.[48] This combination of circumstances - the new moon, Friday, rising sun - was a deliberate choice on the part of the practitioner, to make use of the most beneficial arrangement of celestial forces.

In some contemporary sources this lunar system has been mistakenly inverted, and instead of the phases of the moon being understood in terms of the forces they exert, it is assumed that the waning moon takes away illness because of the apparent shrinking effect. While it is easy to see how this assumption could be made, especially considering the fact that the word "*Abnemme*" means both "to wane" and "to take away," the traditional processes identify that the illness wanes, while the moon waxes, reflecting the dual meaning of "*Zunemme*" as both "wax" and "to take on" – as the moon itself is thought by some to take on the illness.[49]

A mid-19th century conventional doctor's ledger from Oley, Pennsylvania contains the following lunar wart prayer under a section entitled "*Sympathie*," among other prayers for illnesses varying from diarrhea to open wounds:

> *Wider Warzen un Hüneraugen: Wan der Mond im Zunehmen ist, so trete vor ihm, halte der Daumen auf die Warzen un spreche alles was ich sehe das Wachse, und was ich fühle das vergehe im Namen des P. F. et S.S. 3 mahl gesprochen besonders der letzten freytag von den vollen Mond.*
>
> Concerning Warts and Corns: When the moon is waxing, so stand before it, and hold the thumb over the wart and say "Everything I see may it increase, and what I touch, may it decrease in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." [It is to be] spoken 3 times, especially in the last Friday of the full moon.[50]

This ledger could be the work of Dr. Peter Y. Bertolett, Dr. Enoch Grisiemer, or Dr. Francis Palm, all of whom are listed as physicians in the 1850 US Federal Census for Oley Township, although it is possible that the name Francis could indicate a possible Roman Catholic connection to the use of the three highest names in Latin, "*Nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*," which is used four times in the manuscript. Although the Pennsylvania Dutch had only a small Roman Catholic contingency (roughly 1%) this



Doctor's Manual, ca. 1830, Oley Valley, Berks County - Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

An early 19th century manuscript doctor's manual, separated into chapters for materia medica, illnesses and symptoms, terminology in German and Latin, as well as several entries of "Sympathie" or sympathetic cures. Includes incantations to remove warts using the moon, stopping blood, soothing burns and other common cures. Includes the rare usage of Latin for the Trinitarian invocation, "In Nomine Patris, et Fillii, et Spiritu Sancti," - In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - indicating a Roman Catholic influence in the creation of this work.

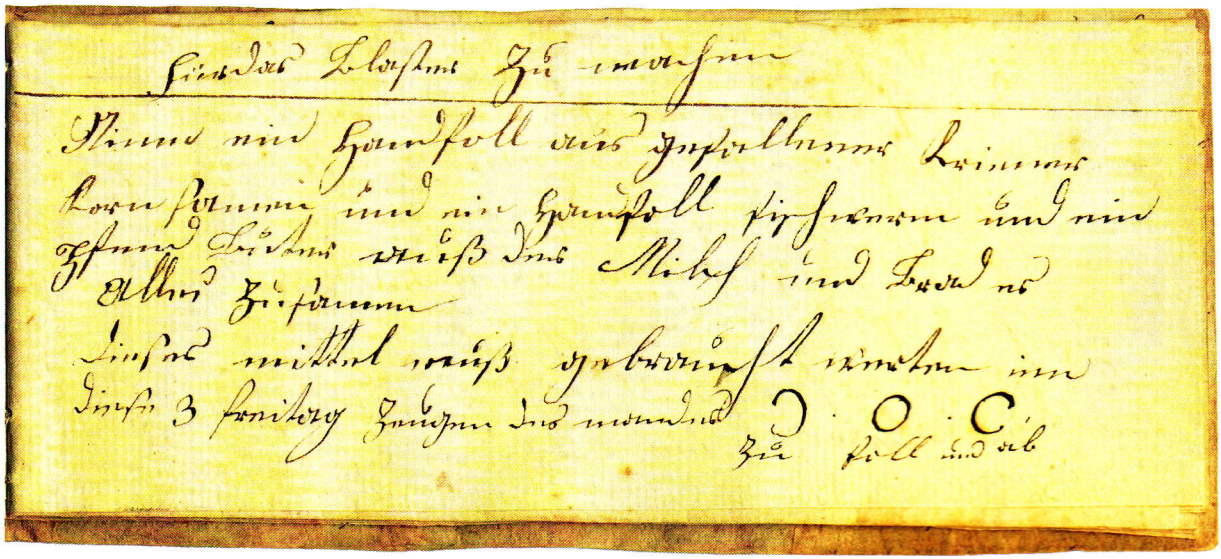
Also includes the SATOR square palindrome inscription, and instructions to write it on butter bread, and to eat it as a cure for rabies.

invocation does not necessarily have to proceed from the pen of a Catholic, as Dr. Don Yoder has observed, folk medicine in Pennsylvania is in part a manifestation of religious "beliefs and behavior inherited from earlier stages of the culture's development," as all protestant groups have their origins in the Catholic faith.[51]

Conrad Reber makes use of the lunar phases in a similar manner in a recipe for a "plaster," a topical application used to close wounds and treat open skin abrasions, whereby three consecutive applications of the compound are scheduled with the moon's phases:

Following the logic already established concerning the lunar influence, it can be understood that the first and second applications of the plaster were intended to serve as a drawing ointment for the removal of illness, and that the third application in the waning moon would later distribute healing properties. This intention is further substantiated by diagrammatic notations showing a waxing crescent, a full moon, and a waning crescent, separated by articulations.

One of the more unusual instances where lunar imagery appears in ritual process is in the creation of ritual objects, which, as a rule, are a rarity in Pennsylvania Dutch practices. In most



Conrad Raber his Docter book, ca. 1800 [Tulpehocken Township, Berks County] PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University
Recipe "To Make a Plaster." Note the diagram showing the progression of the moon.

Für das Blaster zu machen: Nimm ein handvoll aus gefallener Kriener Korn Samen und ein Handvoll fischwerm und ein pfund Buter auß der Milch und brad es Alles zusamen. dieses mittel müß gebraucht werten inn [sic] diese 3 Freitag zeugen des mondes) . O . (zu foll und ab.

To Make a Plaster: Take a handful of fallen green grain seed and a handful of earthworms and a pound of butter and bake it all together. This recipe must be performed on the 3 Fridays in witness of the moon) . O . (as it waxes to full and wanes.

cases, as in the previous selections from Conrad Reber, objects employed in ritual process are often common, domestic or agricultural implements such as the string or the coal shovel, or in other processes, the dung fork, or the broom, which are all returned to their normal place in everyday life after their ritual use.[52]

The creation of a ritual object stands in contrast to this, where an item is endowed with particular virtues as a result of its dedication

through a ritual process, as opposed to the employment of an everyday object in ritual process, where virtue is derived from a more subtle form of consecration derived from repeated use in mundane circumstances. On one hand, this relationship between the ritual and the mundane can appear to normalize the power of ritual elements, and diminish their apparent power; however, it is equally true that this mixing can serve to further describe the interrelationship of life and ritual – not as separate aspects of existence, but as inseparable facets of daily experience.

The 1775 private manuscript of Johann Georg Henninger (1737-1815), an Alsatian immigrant who settled in Albany Township, Berks County, describes a process for creating a knife marked with nine crosses in the time of the new moon, and an accompanying prayer to be used in conjunction with the knife for protection from enemies. This ritual is a survival of a well-documented process in Europe, where folding pocket knives marked with nine moons, or nine crosses were created between the 17th and 19th centuries, in conjunction with the dialect phrases, "*Neun Stearn mit neun Mun / Greifen alle Teufel un*" (Nine stars and nine moons assail all devils), and "*Neun Kreuz und Neun Mon / Gwiagg alles Hexenwerk*" (Nine crosses and nine moons destroy all witchcraft).[53] Henninger's process is specific:

> *Laß ein Messer machen mit 9. + im Neuen Mond, Trags beÿ dir, Wann dich einer mit einer Degen Stechen, oder erschiessen will, so sprich diese Wort, über die Waffen oder Büchs, Ich beschwöre dich, durch die allerheiligste Dreÿfaltigkeit, über sich ich dich, in der Mitten durch sich ich dich, und unter sich helff mir überwinden unser Herr Jesus Christ. Amen.*
>
> Let a Knife to be made with 9 crosses in the New Moon, carry it with you, when one with a sword wants to pierce you, or shoot you, thus speak these words over the Weapon or Gun, "I adjure thee, through the All-Holy Trinity, over thee, in the middle through thee, and under thee, help me to prevail, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.[54]

The accompanying prayer invokes the holy trinity "above...middle...under" – verbally stating the equation of 3 x 3 = 9, although it is uncertain whether the knife itself is used to make the sign of the cross three times in each position.

A variation of this ritual was described in 1969 by Gerald Landis, whose family from Bechtelsville, Berks County, possessed a *Dreikreitzer Messer* (Knife of Three Crosses) handed down to him from a great-grandfather.[55] The process outlined by Landis for creating such a knife is very specific, citing that the iron was to be obtained honestly, but without paying for it, and without saying what it was for, and that the iron must be forged between midnight and one o'clock on New Year's night at a crossroads, with only three strokes of the hammer per year, over the course of three years. The ritual required two people to perform: one to forge the iron, and one to walk clockwise in a circle reciting the *Vater Unser* (Lord's Prayer), to repel the evil spirits which would inevitably be drawn to the process with the intention of preventing the knife's completion. According to his retelling of his great-grandfather's account, the pair were beset each year by "*feirdliche geschpenster, brillende leewe, und wiescht gashtige gediere, un der deiwel selwer*" - Ferocious apparitions, bellowing lions, and ugly horrid animals, and the devil himself.

The knife was used by the family primarily for anti-witchcraft measures such as placing the knife under one's pillow for relieving disturbed sleep, and under the butter-churn to ensure that the thickening of the butter would not be hindered by witchcraft. The knife was also handled by members of the family when an evil influence was perceived. Although the accounts of Henninger and Landis corroborate the continuation of European ritual process in



Barn Blessing Inscription, ca. 1827-1831.
Alfred L. Shoemaker, in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman,* 1955. Courtesy of Don Yoder & the Pennsylvania Folklife Society. (Not included in the exhibit)

Pennsylvania, documentation of this particular process is isolated and rare, as opposed to other more popular anti-witchcraft measures, such as the creation of written blessings, which were popularly carried in one's personal affects, or concealed within domestic and agricultural structures.[56]

Although many examples of written blessings have been discovered in buildings, one particular example directly addresses many of the nuanced agricultural beliefs concerning the effects of witchcraft on the health of livestock. An original barn blessing in the collection the Pennsylvania Folklife Society was reprinted by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker in 1953. The blessing was folded and concealed inside of the cow stalls of a barn in 1827, and was found in the 20th century. The German language inscription was written and crossed out, an action aligned with the ritual sacrifice of the words themselves in order to release the essence of the inscription into the spiritual world.[57]

V[ater].x.S[ohn].x.H[eilige Geist].x.
Gott helffe diesen
vor sei rind Vieh vor allen
shaden und besen .x.x.x. amen
in jesu namen amen Das Fierett
seÿ diesen Vieh ist hat der
Erbodin ist thut das nichts
boses diesen Vieh fleisch
oder blut keinen shaden dut.
V.x.S.x.H.x. Amen dem Vater
sein namen soll stehen von
1827 bis 1831 under 7 Planeten
und under 12 himmlishe Zeichen

F[ather]. x. S[on]. x. H[oly Ghost].x.
God help this person
for his livestock from all
harm und evil. x.x.x amen
in the name of Jesus amen. May
these cows be led, this
undertaking is done, that nothing
evil should be able to harm the
flesh and blood of these cows.
F. x. S. x. H .x. amen. In the name
of the Father, this shall stand from
1827 until 1831 under the 7 planets
and under the 12 heavenly signs.[58]

A series of celestial markings conclude the blessing, in addition to the biblical inscription I.N.R.I (Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum – Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews). These concluding inscriptions are nearly identical to another blessing included in this exhibit, presumably by the same practitioner (see page 31).

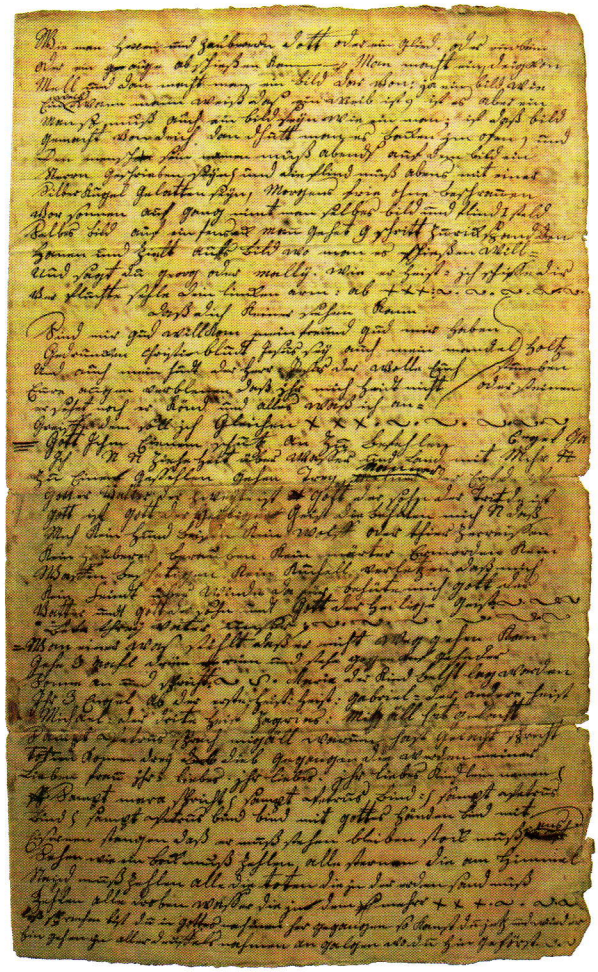
Perhaps most notable in this particular blessing is the fact that it is dated, and apparently only effective for a span of four years. Although one could surmise that a practitioner could have been paid to produce such a document (normally a taboo in Pennsylvania), and therefore would profit from its renewal every four years, it is also equally possible that the number four had some form of sacred or calendric significance to the practitioner. Unlike other barn blessings which are concealed in the structure at the time of construction,[59] this particular blessing was intended to address an illness in the cattle, which

is described as proceeding from an evil source, either a spiritual force, or a practitioner of *Hexerei* – a mercenary application of ritual tradition for the purpose of harming others for personal gain. Although the intentions of a *Hex* (Witch) are entirely different from that of a *Braucher* or *Braucherin,* whose role is to employ rituals for the purpose of re-establishing balance and wholeness, the cosmic and religious principles which undergird *Braucherei* are the very same principles that are exploited by a *Hex.* In fact, even the healings of Christ and his apostles' are counterbalanced by the occasional cursing of a person or thing, such as the aforementioned fig tree in the Gospel of Mark or Paul's' blinding of the false prophet magician Elymas in Cyprus.[60] This latter example explains why some practitioners of *Braucherei* have no problem with the idea of reversing a curse back upon a Hex, in order to act as an agent of retribution.

Although manuscript sources of ritual process are relatively uncommon, even rarer still are documents that directly describe the process of deliberately placing curses. One such example from the early 19th century, formerly of the Roughwood Collection of Dr. Don Yoder, describes the process of sympathetically inflicting an injury by means of proxy with dough baked in the image of a human form.

Wie man hexen und zaubern dott, oder ein Glied, oder ein bein, oder ein auge ab schießen kan – „Man macht ein Deig von Mell und dan macht man ein Bild dar von; ja, ein Bild, wie ein Weib wann man weiß das ein Weib ist, ist es aber ein Man, so muß auch ein Bild seÿn, wie ein man; ist daß Bild gemacht von Deich. Dan dhutt man es backen im Ofen, und den mensch sein namen muß abends auf dem Bild ein Sterrn geschrieben seÿn, un die flind muß abens mit einer Silber Kugel gelatten seÿn, morgens frie ohne beschrauen vor sonnen auf gang nimmt man selbes Bild und flind: steld selbes Bild auf ein Fens Eck man gehet 9 schritt zurick spand den Hanen und zielt aufs Bild wo man es schießen will -Und sagt du Georg oder Mallÿ, wie er heist – ich schiesse dir verfluchte sehle dein linken Arm – al + + +

How one can kill a witch or sorcerer or to shoot an arm, or a leg, or an eye out - One must make a dough of meal, and then he must make an image out of it, indeed, an image, like a woman if one knows that it is a woman, but if it is a man, the image must be of a man, and the image must be of dough. Then it must be baked in the oven, and in the evening the name of the person must be written upon the brow of the image, and the gun must be loaded in the evening with a silver bullet, early next morning, without speaking, before the rise of the sun, one must take the image and gun, place the image in a fence corner. Then one must go 9 paces back, cock the gun and aim it at the image where he wants to shoot it. And you must say "George or Molly," whatever he is called, "I shoot you, accursed be your left arm," etc. + + + [61]



Folio Manuscript of Instructions to Kill a Witch, ca. 1820
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

There are many examples of ritual processes which appear to be on the fringe in terms of their compatibility with the ethics of *Braucherei* and its beneficent role in healing. The previous example is very direct in the literal act of cursing someone, although there are many other questionable processes which are ambiguous in terms of intentionality. One such example is "*Vor das Verblenden*" included in the Henninger manuscript:

Vor das Verblenden. Heut Tritt ich über diese schwell, Christus Jesus ist mein gesell, die Erd mein Schuh, der Himmel mein Huth, die heiligen Engel mein Schwerd, der mich heut sieht ist mir lieb und Wehrt, sondern meine Feind mussen verblenden, daß sie mich an keinen orten sehen noch finden, daß gebe Gott und liebe Frau, Woran daß ich greiffe, dem müssen ich gleichen 15 Vatter unser 5 Glauben. 3 mahl.

For Invisibility. Today I step over the threshold, Christ Jesus is my companion, the earth is my shoes, the heavens are my hat, the holy angel is my sword, he who seeth me today shall have love and worth for me, otherwise mine enemies shall be blinded, that they see me in no place, nor find me, thus grant me God and the dear Lady, whereupon, that whomever I assail, may I match them. 15 Our Fathers, 5 Creeds, 3 times.[62]

While the words of this particular prayer indicate that the invisibility is used to protect the user from the threat of enemy violence, it is clear that this process could potentially be employed for personal gain. This religious invocation is, however, a far cry from the more sinister rituals for invisibility found in the Dutch Country, including one from The Egyptian Secrets of Albertus Magnus, where one "must obtain the ear of a black cat, boil it in the milk of a black cow, then make a thumb-cover of it and wear it on the thumb, and no one will be able to see you."[63]

Henninger's prayer is tame by comparison, offering a lyrical presentation of religious and cosmological imagery. The statement "the earth is my shoes and the heavens my hat" places the practitioner within a cosmological arrangement, spanning the two kingdoms of heaven and earth. This metaphor is echoed in other sources, such as the late 19th century protective broadside which venerates the Three Kings, entitled "*Ein sehr kräftiges, heiliges Gebet*" (A Very Powerful, Holy Prayer) printed in Kutztown, Pennsylvania.[64] In other sources, such as Hohman's first powwow book, *Der Freund in der Noth* (*The Friend in Need*), a thief is captured by giving "the earthly kingdom for a bond, and the heavens for a hat," making use of this act of cosmic placement in a different sense.[65]

The conclusion of Henninger's ritual, with repetitions of three rounds of the Lord's Prayer



Ein sehr kräftiges, Heiliges Gebet,

Welches zu Cöln am Rhein in goldenen Buchstaben geschrieben und aufbehalten wird.

Heute trete ich auf und neige mich gegen den Tag, in deinem Namen, welchen ich empfangen habe. Der erste ist Gott der Vater, † der andere ist Gott der Sohn, † der dritte ist Gott der heilige Geist, † der behüte mir mein Leib und Seel, mein Fleisch und mein Leben, welches mir Jesus Christus, der Sohn Gottes, selber hat gegeben; also will ich gesegnet seyn wie das heilige Himmel-Brod, daß unser lieber Herr Jesus Christus seinen Jüngern selbst gegeben hat. Ich gehe aus, und in das Haus über Geschwöll und Gassen, Jesus † Maria † und Joseph †, die heiligen drey Könige, Kaspar †, Melchior † und Balthasar † sind meine Weg-Begleiter — der Himmel ist mein Hut und die Erde meine Schuhe... Diese sechs heiligen Personen be leiten mich und alles was ich in meinem Haus habe, und wann ich auf der Strosse bin, so wollen sie mich behüten sammt meinen Geführten vor Dieb und Mörder, und bösen Leuten, die mir begegnen, die müssen mich alle lieb und werth haben dazu verhelfe mir Gott Vater †, Gott der Sohn †, Gott der heilige Geist † Jesus, † Maria † Joseph, † (Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar,) und die vier heiligen Evangelisten seyn mit mir in allen meinem Thun, Handel und Wandel, Gehen und Stehen, es sey auf dem Wasser oder Land, vor Feuer und Brand, die wollen mich bewahren mit ihrer starken Hand, Gott dem Vater † ergeb ich mich—Gott dem Sohn † befehl ich mich—in Gott den heiligen Geist † versenke ich mich. Die heilige hochgelobte Dreyfaltigkeit sey ob mir, Jesus, Maria und Joseph vor mir, Caspar, Melchior und Balthasar seyn hinter und vor mir zu allen Zeiten, bis ich komme in die ewige Freud und Seeligkeit, das helf mir Jesus, Maria und Joseph. Amen.

Und wer dies heilige Gebet beten läßt oder hören beten, und den sich trägt, der wird nicht des jähen Todes sterben, noch im Wasser ertrinken, noch im Feuer verbrennen; und wer dies heilige Gebet in seinem Hause hat, dem kann keine Pest, weder Donner noch Hagel schaden, und wo eine schwangere Frau ist, die in Kinds-Nöthen ist, und nicht gebären kann, der gebe man dies heilige Gebet in die rechte Hand, oder bete ihr dasselbe vor, das sie es hört, so wird sie von Stund an des Kindes entbunden; so es getauft ist, so man dieses heilige Gebet in die Wiegen, oder heute es denselben an, so wird das Kind von dem Verbrechen und anderem Unglück befreyet seyn, dann es soll kein Mensch seyn, der nicht dieses Gebet den sich trägt, dieweil er vor allen diesen Nachstellungen befreyt ist.

†C. †M †B.

Sancti tres Reges † Caspar † Melchior † Balthasar, orate pro nobis nunc & in horris mortis nostrae, Amen.

Reid u. Gehring's Dampfpreß-Druck, Kutztown, Pa.

Ein Sehr Kräftiges Gebet (A Very Powerful Prayer) ca. 1880, Urich & Gehring, Kutztown PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University - Don Yoder Collection

A rare Kutztown broadside blessing, attributed to the Three Kings and the cathedral dedicated to them in Cologne, Germany.The prayer appeals to the Three Kings, symbolized by the initials †C†M†B for protection against natural disaster and the predations of the wicked. The concluding words in the central column ask for assurance both now and in eternity, echoing the last lines of the Roman Catholic Hail Mary, "...nunc, et in hora mortis nostrae" - "Now and in the hour of our death."



Early Protective Blessing, 18th-century - Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer
Personal protective blessing produced in black and red ink on the verso of an unidentified, 18th-century Philadelphia printed estate document. Features a winged angel with a burning heart and crown, associated with the mystical vision of the Sophia or feminine aspect of the Holy Spirit, popular among certain pietist groups in early Pennsylvania. The angel oversees the six days of creation, depicted within the Star of David, with planetary symbols within each point and the sun in the center. However, Mars is missing, and replaced by a "J" - possibly an intentional inversion of martial influence as a protection from violence. The inscription I.N.R.I. (Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum - Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) is a common protective inscription, flanked above and below with three crosses, symbolic of the Holy Trinity, above and below. Adonai, a Hebrew name of God meaning Lord is inscribed on the left. Creases indicate it was folded and carried on the person.

fifteen times and the Apostles Creed five times, is yet another element of Roman Catholicism present in works of Pennsylvania folk culture. These rounds of prayers are a remnant of the Sacrament of Penance, where confession is typically followed by similar recitations, in addition to other prayers, such as the *Ave Maria*, are also mentioned in healing manuscripts from the mid-19th century.[66]

While several studies have drawn attention to the survivals of Roman Catholic elements in *Braucherei* ritual, seldom have the more seemingly "exotic" elements of early Protestantism been explored to any great degree. For instance, Dr. Martin Luther's first vernacular translation of the Baptismal Rite of 1523 incorporates such elements as exorcizing a child by blowing under the eyes three times, anointing the ears and nose with the minister's spittle, and the use of salt (which was actually put into the infant's mouth), along with more formally accepted elements such anointing with oil, and making the sign of the cross.[67] Each of these elements appears in Pennsylvania Dutch folk practice, and it is necessary to include in the progression of this material's entrance into folk culture the period of adjustment in early Protestantism, before elements like these were formally removed from the liturgy.

Certain radical religious movements also contributed to the development of folk ritual in Pennsylvania, most notably the influences of mysticism and pietism, which encouraged a stronger connection between the individual and the divine through various devotional practices and valued extra-biblical revelations, including visionary experiences and even non-canonical religious texts such as the *Himmelsbrief*. Evidence of this mystical undercurrent in Pennsylvania has been well explored through studies of the Hermits of the Wissahickon,[68] and the Ephrata Community founded by Conrad Beisel.[69] While the mystical element was not by any means ubiquitous in early Pennsylvania Dutch Communities, its influence was profoundly felt among the folk.

One of the most visually elaborate personal protective blessings ever discovered in Pennsylvania by Dr. Don Yoder combines numerous religious inscriptions and mystical folk art motifs. This undated 18th-century written blessing features the crowned image of the Virgin Sophia, a mystical emblem of the spirit of wisdom, which was a popular image on early spiritual documents, tombstones and date stones on houses throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. In this blessing the winged visage of Sophia is positioned over the abbreviation of INRI, three crosses, the Hebrew name of God *Adonai*, as well as a Star of David articulated with planetary symbols of the seven days of the week and the sun in the very center.

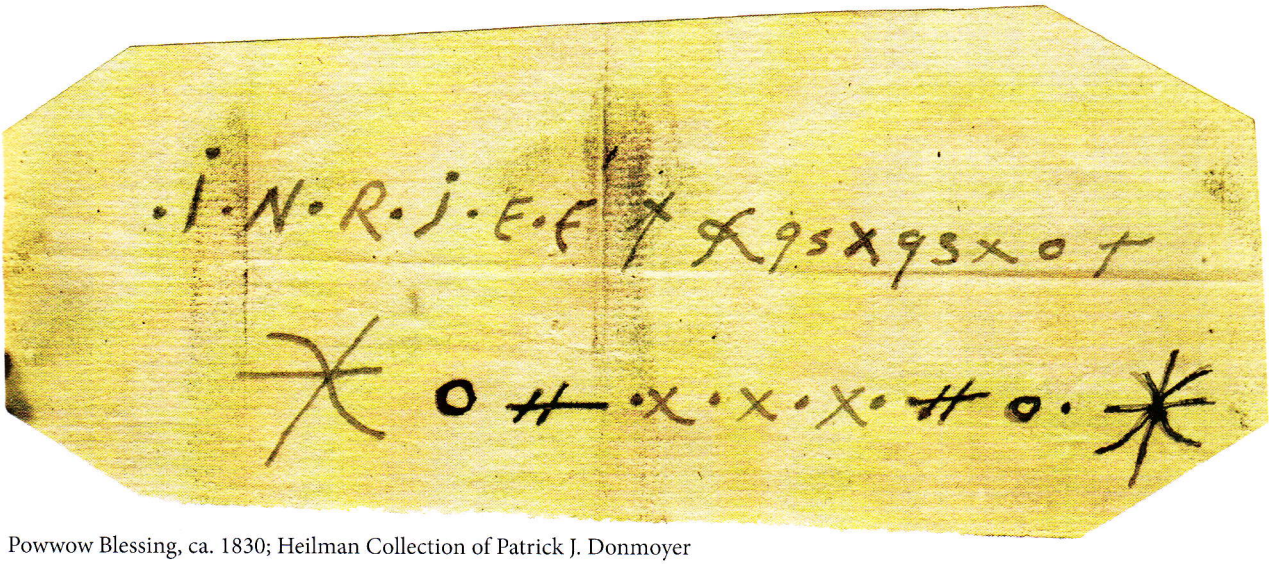
This personal blessing features a visual vocabulary of Pennsylvania Dutch symbolism that is at once religious and protective, mystical and artistic. Based on physical evidence, it is clear that this document was folded in fourths and carried in a wallet for protection. Sources such as these are important for the interpretation of the full spectrum of application of esoteric images, visual and verbal, of the Pennsylvania Dutch in both sacred and the secular contexts.[70]

While these particular manuscript selections have demonstrated the prevalence of cosmological, folk-religious, and mystical expressions in Pennsylvania Dutch ritual process, this exhibition has only begun to scratch the surface of the issues surrounding the interpretation of esoteric materials – a field which will remain positively rife with opportunities for folk-cultural exploration for generations to come. Moreover, these private manuscript works have revealed the sheer diversity of ritual content and processes manifest in three centuries of continued use in Pennsylvania. These veritable windows into the past offering a glimpse of the vast repository

of previously unpublished materials available in rare circumstances.

These primary sources, in their wealth of previously unknown material and their apparent departure from common, well-worn secondary sources, emphasize the need to incorporate more original manuscript material in folk cultural research to provide a fuller, more accurate description of ritual process as it was employed by active practitioners, not merely by compilers of dubious credibility, such as John George Hohman.

Furthermore, this exhibit has also shown that, when taken as a whole, the ritual processes disclosed in manuscript literature and material culture are part of a consistent and highly-developed system of cosmological belief that integrates domestic, agricultural, and religious folk culture. It is no longer acceptable to present this tradition as a mere random accumulation of disparate throw-offs from previous stages of the culture's history and development, but instead as a living tradition with a vibrant past, and the potential for a dynamic and spirited future. + + +



Powwow Blessing, ca. 1830; Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Protective blessing, to be folded and carried on the person, with J.N.R.J inscription, as well as other alpha-numerical and pictographic inscriptions. The handwriting and inscription perfectly matches a barn blessing, dated 1827-1831, found by Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker of the Pennsylvania Folklife Society in 1953 and featured in the *Pennsylvania Dutchman* in 1955.

ENDNOTES

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11. *Das vortreffliche Zigeuner-Büchlein,* Reading, Pa: Heinrich Sage, 1810; Donmoyer *The Friend in Need* (2012)

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31. Ms. Heilman, found tucked between the pages of a dual edition of Hohman and Helfenstein from Scheffer and Beck, Harrisburg 1853.

32. Hohman *Der lange Vorborgene Freund* (1820): 28

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34. Helfenstein, Georg Friedrich. *Soli Deo Glroia. (*ca. 1820):42-43

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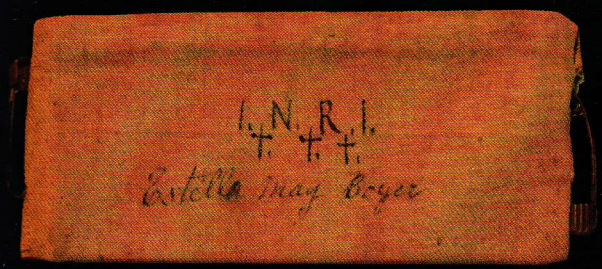
70. MS. Yoder - Sophia Blessing ca.1790

Powwowing in Pennsylvania

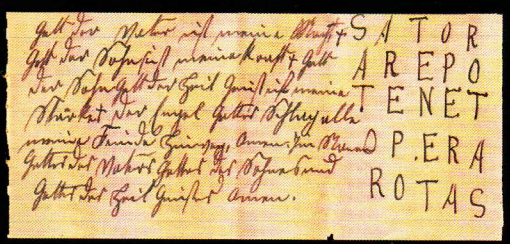
Turn of the 20th Century, Modern Era & Popular Culture

Powwow and *Braucherei* practices flourished throughout the 20th Century, but with the increased development of national as opposed to ethnic identity, as well as ease of transportation and the rise of mass-media in America, the Pennsylvania Dutch were no longer isolated in rural communities. As a result, people from outside of Pennsylvania became increasingly aware of folk cultural practices in the Dutch Country, and these practices were featured in mainstream media - often depicted in a negative or patronizing light. As the health care system of the early 20th century began to develop and rapidly change with new technology, powwow was no longer the primary care of many rural people, but instead, increasingly it became a supplement to conventional, modern medicine. However, many folk practitioners became aware that new laws concerning medical licensing had the potential to complicate the use of powwow for assisting the sick. In addition, healthcare professionals often saw traditional practices as being opposed to the values to conventional medicine and social progress. Despite these difficulties, Pennsylvania Dutch folk medicine continues to persist, and has lasted into the present day, albeit in a much quieter, and less overt manner.







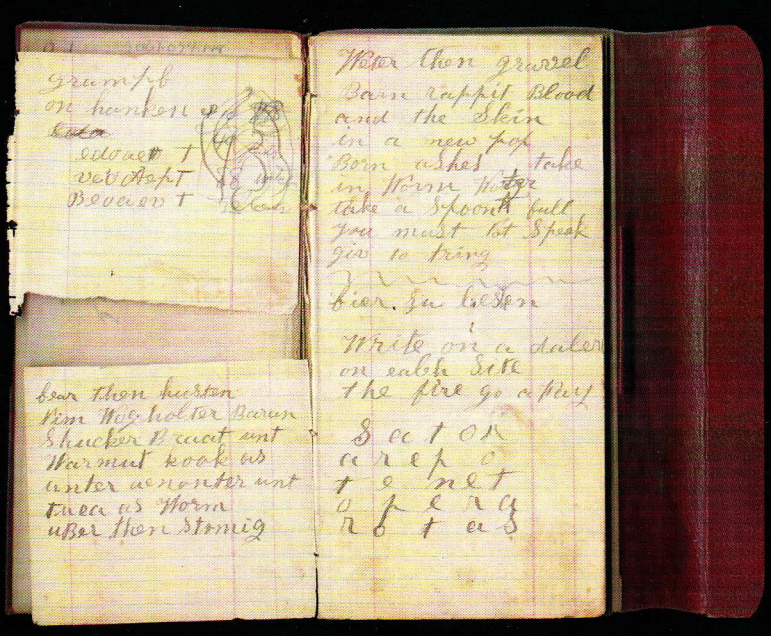


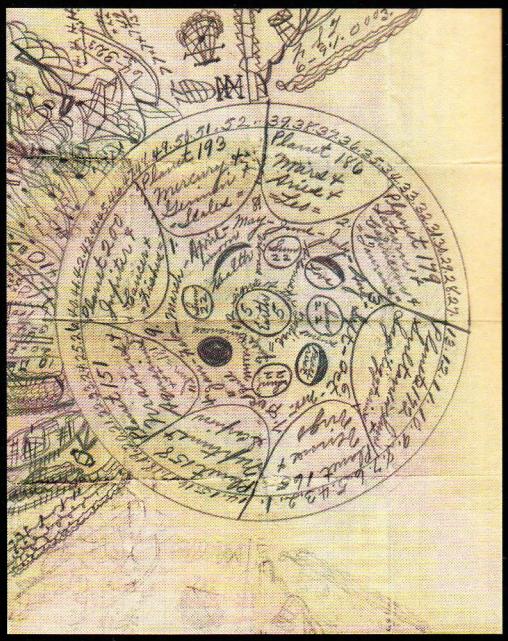
Clockwise From Top:

Dr. Joseph H. Hageman of Reading, Berks County, known for the creation of elaborate blessing inscriptions for healing and protection.The New York Times called him "the greatest powwow doctor who ever lived." (Courtesy of Thomas Gable & Family)

Blessing made for Emma Jane Weidner, 1887 [Reading, Pennsylvania] Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Blessing for Estella May Boyer, 1895 [Reading, Pennsylvania] Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University





Above, Left To Right:

Powwow Ledger, Henry H. Batman (1845-1919) ca. 1916, Tylersport, Montgomery Co. - PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University
20th-century ledger book, written in phonetic Pennsylvania German dialect. Includes cures for coughs, kidney stones, sweeny, worms, gangrene, and other ailments. Includes the classic use of the SATOR magic square palindrome for extinguishing fire without water. Contains the names of family members Charles and Annie S. Batman.

Astrological Blessing written for Henry Oscar Reppert, ca. 1916, Hamburg, Berks Co. - PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University
Personal astrological natal chart and blessing, presumably to be carried on the person for protection. The chart is divided by 52 degrees, and lists The blessing lists Henry Oscar Reppert of Hamburg, Berks County, born 1889, his wife Alice Fritta (Mengel) Reppert, born 1889, their daughter Dorothy May, born 1915, and son Charles Irvin, 1916. Closes with the statement: "Born in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen, Amen, Amen. Planets Venus, Mars, and Jupiter rule for seven years."



The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 2, 1928

100 DIE IN CHILE AS EARTHQUAKE SHAKES COAST

Night Shock Wrecks Buildings, Terrorizes Populace, Many Hurt in Panic

Early Reports Indicate Heavy Toll of Life; 17 Drown When Tenidor Bursts Reservoir at Mine

FAMILY, VICTIM AND SLAYERS IN WITCH MURDER

WITCH MURDERER UNDER SUSPICION IN GIRL'S SLAYING

Police Probe York "Pow Wow Doctor's" Possible Connection With Death of Factory Employee; Farmer Victim's Belief in "Black Art" Disrupted Their Home, Declares Widow and Daughter

County Authorities Launch Vigorous Inquiry Into Practices of Widespread Cult; Strength Mainly in Rural Sections; "Formulae" of Blymyer, former Asylum Inmate, Are Found

By HENRY G. BRUBAKER

SCHOFIELD BACKS POLICE PAY BOOST AS HE TAKES OFFICE

Men to Retain Posts at Present, New Director Says

EQUALITY STRESSED BY HOOVER IN FIRST S. AMERICAN SPEECH

PROBE TO CONTINUE FIVE MORE MONTHS, MCNAGHAN REVEALS

Left:

York Hex Murder Media Coverage 1929, *Philadelphia Inquirer*
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Media coverage appeared on a national scale in the wake of the murder of Nelson Rehmeyer in York County, dubbed the "Hex Murder." The murderer, John Blymire, an escapee from a mental asylum, was convinced that Rehmeyer had placed a curse upon him. In an attempt to break the "hex" by obtaining a lock of hair or Rehmeyer's copy of John George Hohman's *Long Lost Friend*, Blymire and two accomplices John Curry and Wilbur Hess killed Rehmeyer on the night of Thanksgiving in 1928. The trial drew national media attention to the persistence of beliefs associated with powwow in Pennsylvania, however, this media attention was heavily biased, and promoted many negative, false, and culturally insensitive stereotypes about the Pennsylvania Dutch people. The incident is often indicated as the single-most defining moment in Pennsylvania's anti-powwow crusade, which swept across the state. Threats from lawmakers, physicians' councils, and civic organizations forced traditional healing to be conducted in secrecy for fear of prosecution for practicing medicine without a license.

The Celebrated SATOR Square Palindrome



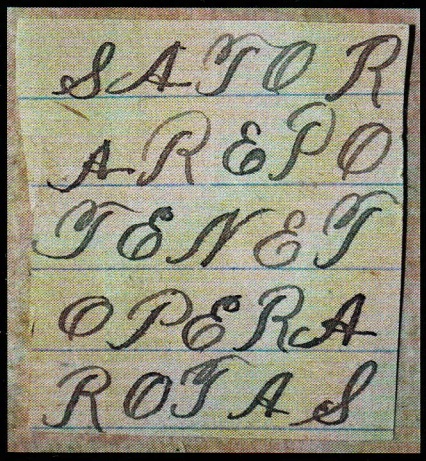
This ancient Latin palindrome, reading the same forwards, backwards and upsidedown, has been used as a protective talisman since at least the first century. Translating as "The sower holds the wheels from the bank with effort," the square is a metaphor for both agricultural and magical art. The sower is the practitioner or farmer who by means of effort, is able to render the cyclical "wheels" of the cosmos useful for productive purposes, whether this is at the banks of a fertile river for the farmer, or the heavenly divide in the celestial sphere for the healer.

Plate with SATOR Square Inscription
Plate ca. 1800; Inscription date unknown
Pewter Plate made by Thomas Compton, London
Nancy and Abe Roan Collection

John George Hohman provides instructions for extinguishing fire without water in *The Long Lost Friend* by using a plate inscribed with the SATOR square palindrome. The plate would be thrown into fire and the fire would then be put out. This extraordinary find by the late Pennsylvania Dutch folklife scholar Donald "Abe" Roan is a rare example of this charm being used in the 19th century. Roan found this blackened pewter plate at a yard sale, and upon cleaning it, revealed the SATOR inscription on both sides.

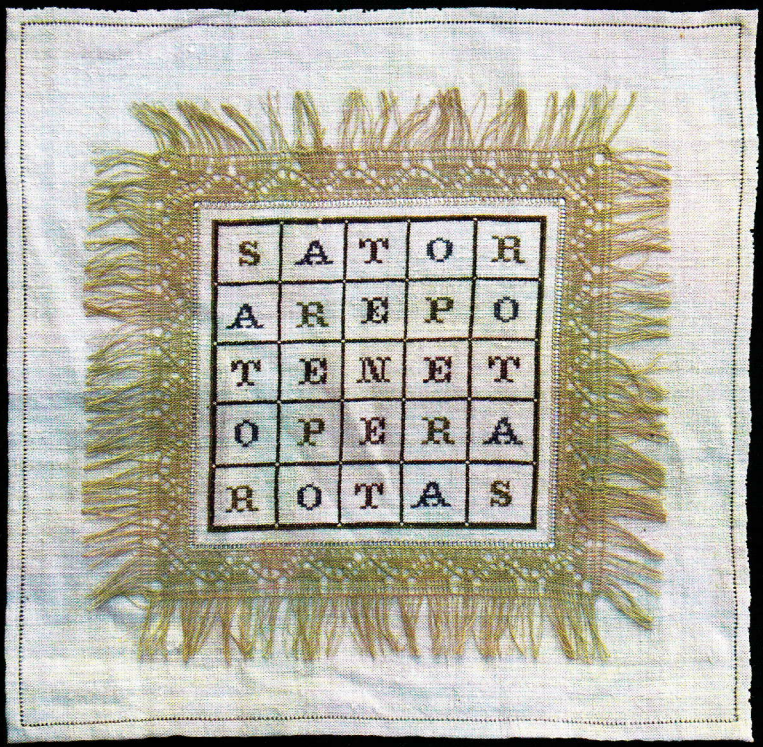
Below:
Schluckzettel
(Edible Charm) ca. 1880
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Small SATOR inscription written on paper, intended to be fed to cattle to cure disease and protect from malicious spiritual forces.



Right: SATOR Embroidery, 20th Century
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

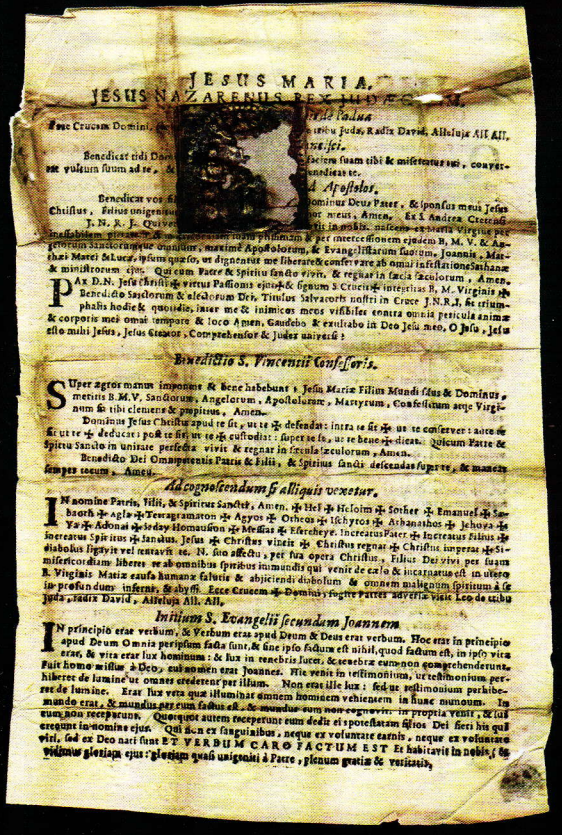
Needle-point handkerchief, made in Soyen, Bavaria, intended to protect the bearer. The piece was commissed by the former owner, Dr. William Woys Weaver, and the lace broder was added later by an artist in Mühldorf, Bavaria.



Powwowing in Pennsylvania

The House Blessing & The Himmelsbrief

Of the many traditions that migrated to Pennsylvania from German-speaking regions, the placing of protective documents within the home or on the person are perhaps some of the best known manifestations of folk religion and ritual process. Most of these blessing inscriptions were printed, not by practitioners of ritual healing, but instead by entrepreneurial publishers who sold them at modest prices to the public. In many cases however, handwritten copies of "Letters from Heaven" (*Himmelsbriefe),* claiming to be copied from original documents written by the hand of God, were popular in Europe and North America, and could be produced by anyone who could read and write. Many early handwritten copies were secretly carried with one's personal belongings, and even carried by soldiers in times of war. As time passed, these blessings became more ornate, and were intended for display in the home. Diverse and visually appealing, the *Himmelsbrief* tradition thrived in Pennsylvania, and increased in popularity even beyond the original point of origin in Europe, where the tradition declined.


JESUS MARIA.

JESUS NAZARENUS REX JUDÆORUM.

Benedictio S. Vincentii Confessoris.

Ad cognoscendum si aliquis vexetur.

Initium S. Evangelii secundum Joannem.



Above, From Left To Right

Latin Prayer against Witches and Demonic Attacks, 17th Century, European - Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer
A rare, late 17th century Roman Catholic protective document attributed to Fr Bartholomaeus Rocca Palermo Inq[uisitor] of Turin. The broadsheet is printed on both sides with blessings attributed to St. Vincent, invocations of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew highest names of God, and passages from the Gospel of John on the verso. The document was folded, sealed with wax, as well as a square metal cover.

Himmelsbrief (Heavenly Letter), ca. 1860, Augustus Kohler, Philadelphia - Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer
One of the finest imprints of an embellished *Himmelsbrief,* attributed to Augustus Kohler of Philadelphia, with blue and gold accents, highly ornate text, an image of Christ, as well as a pair of angels, carrying the Himmelsbriefe in their hands.



Above:

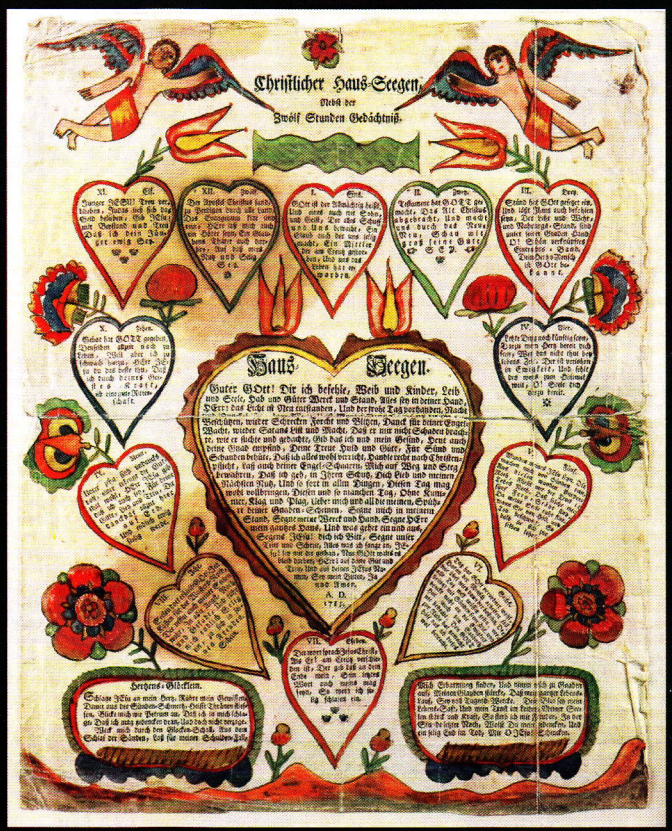
Haus-Segen (House Blessing) 1791, Hand-drawn and lettered by Heinrich Weiss, Southern Lehigh or Northern Montgomery Co. Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center Collection

Schoolmaster Heinrich Weiss created this Haus-Segen in fraktur for an unknown recipient. The translation of the first verse of text is as follows: "Jesus, dwell in my house and never leave it again. Dwell in it with your grace or else I am forsaken. O you man of great blessing, Come with your benediction. Give peace, happiness, fortune, and salvation. So that my house would have the same wealth and blessing, That came to Job and Abraham, And also pour your blessing graciously upon me."

Right:

Haus-Segen (House Blessing) Imprint ca. 1785 Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata, Lancaster County; Hand Decoration ca. 1790-1800, Printed at the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center Collection

This well-known Haus-Segen was produced at Ephrata with designs attributed to the fraktur artist Heinrich Otto, who also hand decorated many of the documents – although this particular house blessing may not be by his hand. The large center heart bears a prayer asking for God's protection of home and family, while each of the twelve hearts contain text relating to numbers of Christian significance, from one God to twelve apostles.



Powwowing in Pennsylvania

European Roots & Parallels from the Old Country

Pennsylvania's cultural and spiritual climate was directly imported from Europe, comprised of protestant rural communities who were free to manifest their folk beliefs in William Penn's "Holy Experiment" - a colony with no enforced, official state-sponsored religion. Although most German-speaking immigrants who came to Pennsylvania immigrated for economic reasons, their folk beliefs found a safe haven for continued use and growth. In parts of Europe, depending upon the preference of local princes and municipalities, folk practices were not always tolerated, and particularly during the time of the inquisition, the Rhine River Valley was not a safe place to practice ritual healing that contrasted with either official protestant or Roman Catholic practices. Despite this, the material culture of the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe display profound parallels to Pennsylvania folk culture. In addition, the decidedly Roman Catholic influence present in Pennsylvania's ritual traditions of Braucherei are easier to understand in context with European origins. Although the Pennsylvania Dutch had only a small Roman Catholic contingency, catholic imagery is used in folk ritual. As Dr. Don Yoder has observed, folk medicine in Pennsylvania is in part a manifestation of religious "beliefs and behavior inherited from earlier stages of the culture's development." Because all protestant groups have their origins in the Catholic faith, Pennsylvania folk culture has maintained elements of European Catholicism in folk medicine traditions.







Der heil. Dreykönigzettel oder Gebeth, so zu Cölln am Rhein in der Dom-Kirchen mit goldenen Buchstaben geschrieben und aufbewahret wird.

Gebeth.

Im Namen JESU stehe ich heute auf und neige mich dem Tag, in dem Namen, den ich in der heiligen Tauf empfangen, der erste ist Gott Vatter, der andere Gott Sohn und der dritte Gott heiliger Geist. Dieser Name behüte mein Fleisch, Blut, Seel, Leib und Leben, welches mir Jesus, der Sohn Gottes geben. Also will ich gesegnet seyn, wie der heilige Kelch und Wein, so der Priester auf dem Altare wandelt, und wie das wahre Himmels-Brod, so Jesus seinen zwölf Jüngern hat gegeben. Ich trette über das Thür-Geschwell: Jesus † Maria † Joseph † die drey heilige Könige, Kaspar † Melchior † Balthasar † seyn meine Weggesellen: der Himmel ist mein Hut, die Erde mein Schuh, der Stern der drey Könige führe mich auf die rechte

C † M † B †

Heilige 3 Könige, Caspar †, Melchior †, Balthasar †, bittet für uns jetzt und in der Stunde unsers Absterbens.

wahre Buß-Strassen. Diese sechs heil. Personen seynd meine Gefährten im Hin- und Hergehen, welche mir begegnen, die haben mich lieb und werth, darzu helfe mir Gott Vater † der mich erschaffen, Gott Sohn †, der mich erlöset, Gott der heil. Geist †, der mich geheiliget hat. Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar, steht mir bey in allen meinem Thun und Lassen, Handel und Wandel, Gehen und Stehen es sey auf dem Wasser, oder Land, die wollen mich vor Kugel Feuer, Wasser, und alles, was dem Leib und der Seel schädlich ist, allzeit behuten und bewahren, im Leben und Sterben, mit ihrer starken und mächtigen Gnad. Gott dem Vatter ergeb ich mich, Gott dem Sohn empfehle ich mich, Gott dem heil. Geist versenke ich mich, die H. H. Dreyfaltigkeit † sey ober mir, Jesus † Maria Joseph, vor mir, Caspar, Melchior Balthasar † hinter mir, diese bewahren mich, (mein Haus und alles, was ich hab) jetzt und allzeit bis ich komm zu der ewigen Glückseligkeit. Im Namen GOtt des Vaters †, Sohns †, und des heil. Geistes † Amen.

Drei-Königzettel oder Gebeth (Three Kings Blessing)
18th Century, Johann Hendl, Urfahr, Linz, Austria

A European broadside of the Three Kings Prayer, which was later republished in Pennsylvania, most notably, in Kutztown by Urich & Gehring ca. 1880. This prayer developed in the wake of veneration of the Three Kings following the moving of their legendary remains to the cathedral in Cologne.

Opposite Page, From Left To Right:

Andächtiges Gebet zu unserm Heiland Jesu
(Devotional Prayer to our Savior Jesus), 1864, Ofen, Budapest
PA German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University

An emblematic tract, containing a devotional prayer for spiritual and physical healing, making use of the imagery of the blood and wounds of Christ. The emblem on the cover depicts the mystery of the Eucharist, with Christ's presence in the wine of the chalice. At the top is the symbol of the Pelican feeding her young from a wound in her breast - an allegory for the sacrifice of Christ.

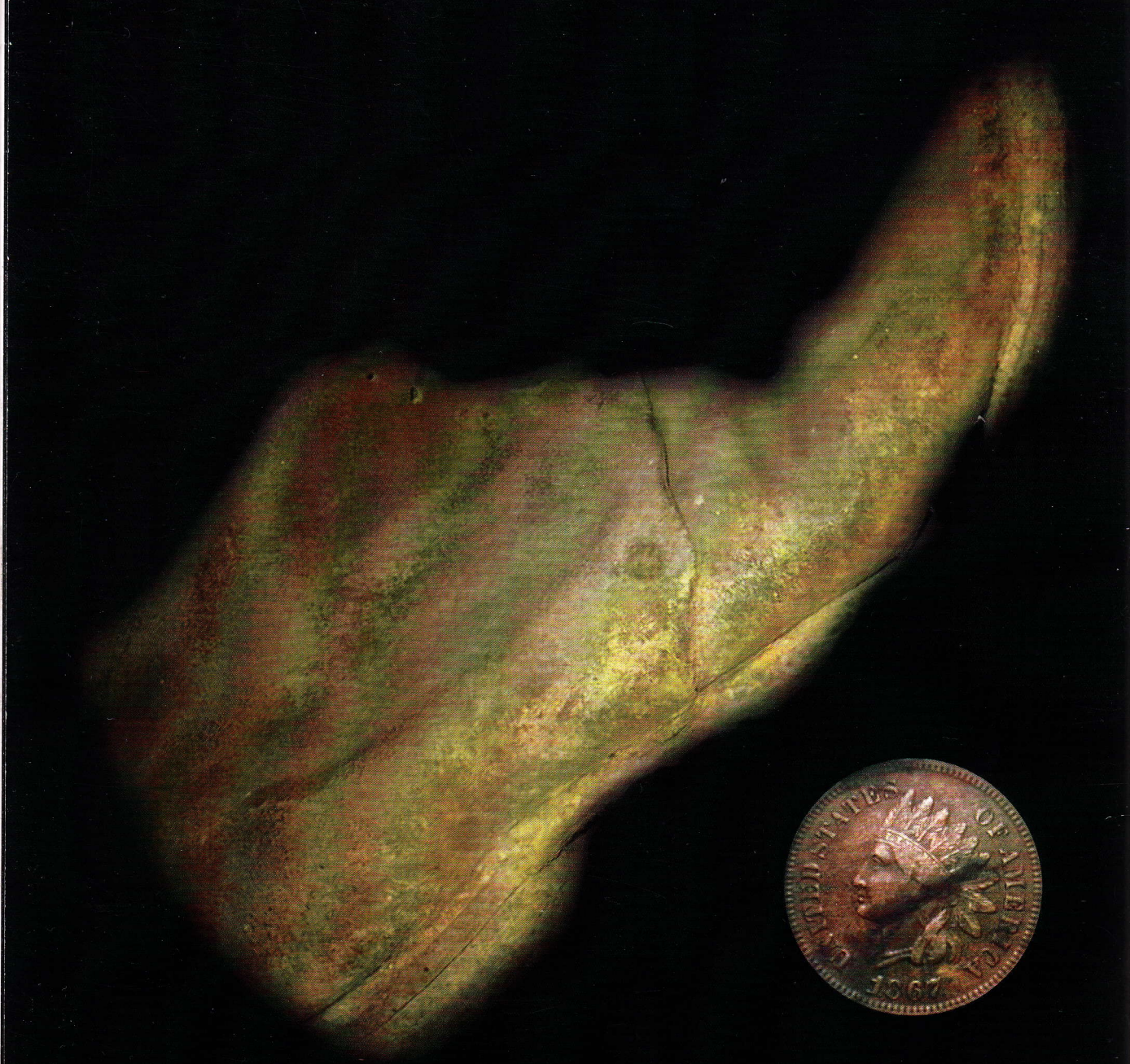
Drei-Könige-Segen (Three Kings Blessing)
18th Century, Johann Hendl, Urfahr, Linz, Austria
Heilman Collection of Patrick J. Donmoyer

Copper engraving embellished with fabric and paper, depicting the Three Kings Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar standing under the star of Bethlehem. The inscription reads "O Blessed Star, cast thy light upon this house." The Three Kings appear extensively in both officially sanctioned and folk religious blessings throughout Europe and Pennsylvania.



Wrought Iron Horse Votive, 18th Century, Switzerland

A rare iron horse votive, used to bless livestock in the barn. While actual use of votives varied, this piece was intended as a stand-in for the actual horses, and was brought to church for blessing on appropriate days. The votive would then be placed in the barn as an annual tradition. Iron votives of horses and cattle were once common in Europe, and some have speculated that such practices may have migrated to Pennsylvania, however, this has never been substantiated.



Concealed Shoe and Penny from Log House & Bake Oven 1867, Bern Township, Berks County. Private Collection of Jim and Marcia Houston

A shoe and penny were found as ritual concealments on an historic property in Berks County. The shoe was located between the roof and the arched bakeoven. The penny was found belly-high to the left-hand side of the front entrance of the house. Shoes have been found as ritual concealments in Europe and the United States from the middle ages up until the 20th century, most commonly placed inside the walls, or foundations at the time of the buildings' construction for blessing or protection. The shoes are almost always old and worn out, or intentionally mutilated at the time of their placement. Beliefs in early Pennsylvania reflect the notion that shoes held the luck or fortune of the individual, and were tossed after the bride and groom for good luck at weddings. John George Hohman mentions this in *The Friend in Need* (1813). A penny is frequently concealed in a buildings to record the date of establishment, and/or to pay tribute to benign house spirits for the protection of the structure. Although the concealment of shoes and pennies is not unique to the Pennsylvania Dutch, these types of ritual deposits demonstrate commonalities in traditional folk culture across ethnic and regional boundaries.